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THROUGH  
HUNDRED GATES

BY NOTED CONVERTS FROM  
TWENTY-TWO LANDS

Lamping, Severin, father, 1901-

*Translation, Arrangement, and Foreword by*  
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THE BRUCE PUBLISHING COMPANY  
MILWAUKEE

Cum Permissu Superiorum  
Nihil obstat: RAYMOND F. STOLL, S.T.D., censor librorum  
Imprimatur: ✠ JOHN T. McNICHOLAS, Archbishop of Cincinnati  
December 27, 1938

(Sixth Printing — 1946)

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The Bruce Publishing Company  
Printed in the U. S. A.



To Our  
Father and Mother  
At Home With God

## PREFACE BY THE GENERAL EDITOR

FORTY-ONE important stories of conversions, contributed from all parts of the earth, are offered in this volume. Graphic, straightforward, intensely interesting in their recital, they have been written by men and women who in some way or other have held a place of distinction in the public eye: authors, thinkers, diplomats, teachers, professional workers in various fields, artists, poets, and representatives, too, of the world of sports. Many of the writers are internationally known and their names significant to millions of people.

Racially, we are here admitted into the intimacy of a Pentecostal group, reflecting in a striking way the universality of the Catholic Church: English, Irish, Scotch, North and South American; Danish, Swedish, Norse, German, Hungarian, Spanish, French, and Dutch; Russian, Hindu, Chinese, Japanese, and African, with all the rest of the twenty-two nationalities represented here!

No less interesting than the world-wide representation of the authors is the variety of creeds, cults, and schools of thought out of which by God's inscrutable Providence they found their way into the Church. From Hinduism, Communism, Socialism, they have come to her; from the religions of ancestor worship and idolatry; from agnosticism and freethinking Liberalism; from Jewry as well, and from the many phases of contemporary Protestantism. Out of all the highways and byways of modern thought and speculation they were gathered safely into the one common fold predicted by the prophets and established by Christ in the day that Daniel foretold. And then, peace — the peace of God in their souls!



## *Preface by the General Editor*

Yet all this was not accomplished without vigorous efforts, and not seldom without great sufferings and struggles on their own part. True tales of heroism are the stories told here, that are many and yet one; diversified as the characters and lives of men, different as East from West, and yet bearing silent witness to the fact that there is one thing essential for conversion: the grace of God and man's cooperation with it. So it was when Paul was led into the Church, yet not without his consent and cooperation. So it will be until the last convert finds his way into the same One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church, and she becomes eternally a glorified Church with Christ in Heaven.

Finally, be it noted that the documents offered here have been secured by the compilers over an extended period of time. The hands which wrote them have in some instances ceased from labor, while in others the newly written pages were hurried on just in time for translation. This last phase of the work itself called for an unusual body of experts in many languages. For the entire undertaking we are therefore deeply indebted to the zeal and untiring energy displayed in this adventurous and absorbing task by Fathers Severin and Stephen Lamping, O.F.M.

The volume here offered may well be looked upon as a permanent and precious contribution to religious history, a work whose human interest can never fade. But beneath all that has been written are the unspeakable operations of the Spirit of God, hidden and subtile, whose outward manifestations we are privileged to witness in at least some slight degree.

JOSEPH HUSSLEIN, S.J., PH.D.,  
*General Editor, Religion and Culture Series*

St. Louis University,  
September 12, 1939

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Hide me, mother! my fathers belong'd to the church  
of old,  
I am driven by storm and sin and death to the  
ancient fold,  
I cling to the Catholic Cross once more, to the Faith  
that saves.  
My brain is full of the crash of wrecks, and the  
roar of waves.

— From *The Wreck* by Alfred Lord Tennyson.



## FOREWORD: PRESENT-DAY TRENDS AND RECENT CONVERSIONS

AIMLESSNESS and superficiality, coupled with indifference in fundamental issues, are the predominant traits of modern humanity. While the ingenuity of man has achieved astounding results in the field of science and invention, his deficiency in the spiritual realm is calamitous beyond dispute. What a sad spectacle does not modern man present when he poses as a rational being and lays claim to an education without ever having seriously attempted to answer the paramount question of man's ultimate destiny! Millions living in blissful ignorance of their final goal must, upon inquiry, join in that candid but mortifying reply: "I do not know where I am going, but I am on my way."

Others again, to whom religion once gave a definite answer to life, have been browbeaten into relinquishing their Faith by writers and lecturers whose method it is to stress their own intellectual and cultural superiority. A critical analysis of the technique employed by such propagandists in the press and on the platform not seldom reveals an inclination to use certain stock phrases and epithets calculated to distort the judgment of their readers or hearers. Illustrations of this method are given by Mr. John Coyne in an article contributed to the *American Ecclesiastical Review*.<sup>1</sup> As pertinent examples we may cite: "scientists tell us," "that able historian Professor B. declares," "Christian mythology," "medieval superstition," "traditional morality," "dogmatic fabrications," and the like. This approach is tantamount to intellectual

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<sup>1</sup> February, 1938.



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intimidation of the unsuspecting reader. Its frequent recurrence begets vacillation in timid minds insufficiently trained in their religion, and ultimately leads them to discard their Faith altogether — not as a result of logical deductions, but merely for fear of being classified as “out-moded religious reactionaries.”

Another source of confusion is the multiplicity of religious sects, cropping up like mushrooms, each claiming to embody the pure form of Christianity in spite of the most glaring contradictions. Thus today we have communities in the United States of not more than eight hundred persons who are divided into no fewer than eight different denominations. Nothing except the lack of independent thinking prevents this state of affairs from causing even more misgivings on the part of the faithful.

In reply to a question concerning a certain individual's religious affiliation Jonathan Swift in his *Polite Conversations* makes one of his characters answer: “Why, he is an Anythingarian.” The remark applies equally to countless individuals of our own day. Millions of worshipers are perfectly satisfied to continue with no more definite concepts as long as no demands are made on their reasoning faculties.

Lastly, for non-Catholics who may entertain doubts as to their religious conviction, the reassuring formula has been invented that “One religion is as good as another.” Those who take this view nowadays — and their number is legion — hold that religion is a matter of tradition, choice, taste, sentiment. Men, they maintain, may exercise their liberty in choosing it, as they do in the choice of the food they eat and the clothes they wear. Favorite modern shibboleths are: “It does not matter what one believes, but what one does is of sole importance,” or “The brotherhood of man stands above every creed.” These sayings, in fact, constitute the most widespread and insidious heresy of our age. So-called liberalism,

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latitudinarianism, or "broadmindedness in religion" has driven more people out of the Protestant church and prevented more from joining the Catholic Church than anything else in the world. It has delivered millions of churchgoers over to indifferentism and finally to unbelief.

As long as men are satisfied that all religions are equal in the sight of God there is faint hope of their seeking after one which will bind their intellect to definite doctrines and burden their will with difficult obligations. Hence, we find that non-Catholics who embrace the Catholic Faith generally follow a stricter form of religion than the majority of their co-religionists. When such Protestants find themselves unhinged in their belief and seriously in doubt as to its tenability, they inquire, read, and pray. They are ready even to put themselves to all necessary inconveniences in their anxious search after truth.

On the other hand, the man who enjoys unruffled peace in the world's wide and easy creed of indifferentism is not likely to trouble himself by pondering the claims of a Church which exacts a stern, unchanging faith in her doctrine, and is constantly enforcing the strict fulfillment of her precept. Certainly, "broadmindedness in religion" is not the product of a keen intellect. All great thinkers, on the contrary, held such a teaching out of harmony with any serious mind.

Long before John Henry Newman renounced Anglicanism, he condemned this same fallacy in the most emphatic terms. Indeed, as early as 1838 he foresaw the spiritual havoc which indifferentism or liberalism in religion would create in the study of the Gospel, and pointed out the gulf of unbelief to which it would inevitably lead. He felt that those whose duty it was to oppose the tide of unbelief must use all their energies to stem the torrent of indifferentism. This he considered but a process of transition into ultimate infidelity. He realized



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that it would be impossible to lay the foundation of definite religion in the souls of men without first clearing away the drift sands left by indifferentism.

There is another way in which the leader of the Oxford Movement<sup>2</sup> phrased this thought: "You cannot build in the aboriginal forest," he said, "till you have felled the trees." As time went on he became more emphatic in denouncing the spirit of liberalism in religion. On the occasion of his elevation to the Cardinalate, he once more squarely faced this important issue. In the presence of the Pope, Newman summed up the reasons for his uncompromising attitude in the matter. His pronouncements are still of utmost moment in our day. Having thanked the Pontiff for the great honor conferred upon him, he continued:

"And I rejoice to say, to one great mischief I have from the first opposed myself. For thirty, forty, fifty years I have resisted to the best of my power the spirit of liberalism in religion. Never did the Holy Church need champions against it more sorely than now, when, alas! it is an error overspreading as a snare the whole world. And on this great occasion, when it is natural for one who is in my place to look out upon the world and upon the Holy Church as it is, and upon her future, it will not, I hope, be considered out of place if I renew the protest against it which I have so often made. Liberalism in religion is the doctrine that there is no positive truth in religion, but that one creed is as good as another; and this is the teaching which is gaining substance and force daily. It is inconsistent with the recognition of any religion as true. It teaches that all are to be tolerated, as all are matters of opinion. Revealed religion is not a truth, but a sentiment and a taste; not an objective fact — not miraculous; and it

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<sup>2</sup> The Oxford Movement, whose chief exponent is John Henry Newman, is not to be confounded with a movement by the same name founded by Dr. Frank Buchman for the revival of Protestantism.

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is the right of each individual to make it say just what strikes his fancy."

Sound logic should warn us of the dangerous fallacies lurking beneath such misappropriated terms as "liberalism in religion." We should easily be able to apprehend the absurdities to which they must inevitably lead. If all religions are equally true it follows that any self-appointed and self-anointed founder of religion is equal to Christ and even greater than He. Indeed, the assumption, for instance, that Luther founded the true church implies that Christ's attempt at it was a failure. Doubtless, many founders of religions carried over good and noble ideas into separate religious organizations of their own. They were right in some ideas, but wrong in the separation for which they were responsible. Religious individualism, so far as it approves all forms of religion, has neither the sanction of God nor of His revelation.

Christ Himself was intolerant, in the dogmatical sense of the word, as can be proven by every page of Sacred Scripture. "Never," says Cardinal Wiseman, "were men more slightly separated from the acknowledged truth than were the Samaritans in the time of our Lord. . . . Slight as were the dissenting principles of those sectarians, amiable and charitable as may have been their characters, ripe as they were for Christianity, affable and conciliating as the interview (with the Samaritan woman) had hitherto been, no sooner is this important question put, than He makes no allowance, no compromise, but answers clearly and solemnly: 'Salvation is of the Jews.' . . . Thus did this benign and charitable Saviour, who came to seek and save what was lost, and whose first principle it was: 'I will have mercy and not sacrifice' — thus did He hesitate not a moment to pronounce, in the clearest terms, that no deviation from the true religion, however trivial, can be justified or excused in His sight."<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> *Lectures on the Catholic Church.*



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Consequently, the advocates of religious tolerance can hardly plead their cause by appealing to Christ or Christian charity. God is Charity, but He also is Truth. It is impossible to live up to the commandment of charity and at the same time to hide or obscure the truth. The well-known convert writer, William Faber, expresses himself very succinctly on this point:

"The spurious charity of modern times has stolen more converts from the Church than any other cause. While it has deadened the zeal of the missionary, it has fortified the misbeliever in his darkness and untruth, and stunted or retarded in the convert that lively appreciation of the values of the gift of faith, upon which it would appear that his spiritual advancement exclusively depends. . . . The whole truth, even when preached urgently and with forwardness, is a more converting thing than half the truth preached winningly, or an error condescended to out of anxiety of mistaken love."<sup>4</sup>

There is truth in all religions, but the full truth exists in one only, and so, according to God's plan, the certified way to eternal salvation can be one only. Call this intolerance, if you wish, but a religion which is not intolerant in its teachings is merely an opinion, or else a philosophy at most. Usually the suave term "religious tolerance" is employed as a means to beguile the ignorant. The majority of people who consider themselves tolerant are merely indifferent. They would prefer to reduce all religions to a nondescript quality, thereby undermining them all. To be sure, frictions resulting from religious differences might be reduced among people professing a spineless creed. "If we could all agree to be atheists," quoth the Irishman, "we could all live peaceably together as Christians." Peace at the price of truth!

In consequence of this prevalent confusion, this *tohu bohu* in fundamental issues, the world is facing a di-

<sup>4</sup> *Creator and Creature.*

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lemma fraught with ominous forebodings of disaster. At no time in its history, perhaps, has a new orientation been more imperative. All who still retain a sense of objectivity realize more and more that our spiritual life cannot be built on the quicksand of contradictory human opinion but must stand firm on the granite of unswerving dogmas. Any spiritual structure will be doomed to destruction if it lacks the rock foundation of unshaken basic truths.

The realization of this fact has brought many out of the darkest regions of unbelief, heresy, and skepticism, back to the true Church, "the pillar and ground of the truth" (1 Tim. 3:15). There is no religion which can boast of so many and of such outstanding converts as the Catholic religion. Statistics, we admit, can often be variously interpreted. But if non-Catholics embrace the Faith only after mature study and investigation, this in itself constitutes a powerful apology of Catholic doctrine. Their avenues of approach may differ, but the underlying impulse, apart from God's grace, is usually the yearning after truth, redemption, and security.

The number of converts to the Catholic Faith in the United States amounts to about 50,000 annually. To list only the more prominent of them would, therefore, in itself be quite an undertaking. The fact that not only well-educated lay people of all walks of life, but also many Protestant ministers of various denominations are returning to the Church is symptomatic of the failure of Protestantism. "It is estimated," says *The Lamp* of December, 1934, "that of 3,000 converts made in America over a recent period, 327 were Protestant clergymen; 115 were doctors; 126 lawyers; 45 members or former members of Congress; 12 governors or former governors of States; 180 army and navy officers; 206 authors, musicians and persons of cultural prominence." Incidentally, the Most Reverend Bishop Duane G. Hunt, of Salt Lake City, a former Methodist, was the twelfth convert



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elevated to the Episcopal dignity in the United States.

England has an average of from eleven to twelve thousand converts each year. The past years indicated a record number, however, for causes not yet investigated, the year 1937 showed a drop of about 1,000. Since the death of the greatest convert from Anglicanism, Cardinal John Henry Newman († 1890), more than 900 Protestant clergymen of England returned to the Mother Church, and in the whole world no less than 3,000 Protestant ministers resigned their pastorates and became laymen. A recent English convert, Mr. Burges-Bayly, has compiled a list of these convert clergymen with all pertinent data. Conversions among the intellectuals are in fact, most frequent. Mr. Francis Sheed, the English writer and publisher, is authority for the statement that twelve out of thirteen outstanding literary men in England today are Catholic, and all converts to the Catholic Faith.

Even in Germany, the birthplace of Protestantism, the convert movement has made great headway, especially after the World War. Before the advent of Nazism the Church averaged from ten to eleven thousand converts annually in that country. Among prominent German converts we may name the philosophers and writers Theodor Haecker and Rev. Helmut Fahsel; Benedict Momme Nissen, O.P.; Dr. Expedit Schmidt, O.F.M.; Willibrord Verkade, O.S.B.; Dr. Erik Peterson of the University of Bonn, who was considered among Protestants their foremost theologian of the day; Dr. Karl Thieme, likewise theologian and writer of prominence; the novelist and poetess Gertrud von Le Fort and the poetess-artist, Ruth Schaumann, not to mention countless others. A long list of earlier and also of recent German converts is to be found in *Die Kulturkraft des Katholizismus*, by Dr. Hans Rost.<sup>5</sup> Similar compilations could be made regarding other nations.

<sup>5</sup> Second edition, Paderborn, 1930, pp. 411-418.

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Among the best-known converts of this century we may here recall the United States Admiral, Shephard Benson; the brilliant English writer, Gilbert Keith Chesterton; Queen Astrid of the Belgians; the Russian Prince Alexander Wolkonsky; the Norwegian novelist and winner of the Nobel prize, Sigrid Undset; the French writer and ambassador, Paul Claudel; the Italian writer and founder of the Catholic University of Milan, Agostino Gemelli, O.F.M.; Archbishop Mar Ivanios of India; the Japanese Admiral Shinjiro Yamamoto; the former Prime Minister of China, Dom Pierre Célestin Lou Tseng-Tsiang, O.S.B.

One cannot fail to admire the transparent honesty of these modern seekers after God who often struggled for years to dissipate the darkness of uncertainty until finally they arrived, not at the twilight of probability, but at the bright light of certainty and truth.

Those acquainted with convert literature are familiar with the great personal sacrifices a conversion often entails: prolonged mental anguish, social ostracism, and even occasionally the loss of the means of sustenance.

The greatest minds, like Augustine and Newman, realized more than others what a conversion involved. That Newman foresaw what the contemplated step would cost him is apparent in a letter he wrote to his sister on March 15, 1845:

"I have a good name with many: I am deliberately sacrificing it. I have a bad name with more: I am fulfilling all their worst wishes, and giving them their most coveted triumph. I am distressing all I love, unsettling all I have instructed or aided. I am going to those whom I do not know, and of whom I expect very little. I am making myself an outcast, and that at my age — oh! what can it be but stern necessity which causes this?"<sup>6</sup>

Similar experiences have been the lot of other converts. Dr. Erik Peterson of the University of Bonn, Germany,

<sup>6</sup> *Letters and Correspondence of J. H. Newman*, Vol. II.



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addressed the following words to his friend, Karl Barth, after his conversion:

"I am now forty years old. I have renounced my family, my profession and social standing. I have studied theology circumspectly for twenty years. My action was prompted by my conscience, that I might not be a castaway of God. Whosoever judges me, let him know, that I shall appeal against his judgement to the judgement seat of God."<sup>7</sup>

The qualitative gain of the Church, however, does not numerically outweigh her quantitative loss during the trying postwar years. In fact the leakage during the past decades must not be minimized. The unwholesome influence of Rationalism and Materialism, the decline of spiritual values after the World War, the social insecurity of the masses, the satanic propaganda of Communism and National Socialism greatly augmented the number of renegades from the Church. Nevertheless, this wholesale defection is in no sense an invalidation of Catholicism. We must bear in mind that a defection from the Church does not entail the mobilization of the spiritual and moral forces of man as its counterpart the conversion to the Church. Impartial study and zeal for the cause of God may lead a man out of Protestantism, but never out of Catholicism.

Nor is truth always with the masses. It is indeed very questionable whether the majority of those who turned their back on the Church were at all capable of forming an independent opinion regarding the true nature of Christianity and the Church. At all events it is noteworthy that thousands renew their religious affiliations under changed circumstances or in the hour of need. No one ever apostatized on his deathbed, but countless individuals have returned to their faith in the hour of death. All this proves that every defection in religion is not a positive indication of definite failure in faith. Ignorance

<sup>7</sup> *Theologische Blätter*, 1931, Nr. 2.

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in matters of faith or the unwillingness to live up to its tenets is more frequently the cause of apostasy than all charges brought against the Church.

Even among the so-called *intelligentsia* ignorance in matters of religion is frequently appalling. Many are not only incapable of defending their faith intelligently, but also lack the knowledge necessary to counteract the false philosophies and theories detrimental to their faith. Those, however, who nineteen hundred years after the birth of Christ boast of being pagans or atheists desecrate the memory of the pagans of old, for these recognized at least a Supreme Being. A comparison with them would not be to the advantage of our modern pagans. "Paganism of old," writes Sigrid Undset in her *Essays Etapper*, "was a lyric poem to God who concealed Himself from man, an attempt of man to ingratiate himself with the Deity, whilst modern paganism is a declaration of war against God, who has revealed Himself."

One method of extenuating the spiritual conquests of the Church consists in speaking of the "machinations of the Church," of "Rome's lust for power," etc., as if this explained the standing miracle of the Catholic Church. Through what machinations or subterfuge were the 8,000,000<sup>8</sup> pagans converted to the faith under the reign of Pope Pius XI, or the converts with whom this book deals? To all unbiased thinkers the Church always was and will be a world-historic revelation of God's grace and power. Thousands of modern people, whose intellectual honesty cannot be questioned, have found in her the concept of a living Church, witnessed to in the past by the Councils of Nicea, Ephesus, and Chalcedon, and witnessed to at present by her houses of worship, schools, and monasteries in all parts of the world.

She existed before she was actually universal in a

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<sup>8</sup> The October issue, 1938, of the *Union Missionnaire du Clergé de France* states that 6,000,000 pagans were converted in ten years.



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geographical sense, but could not exist without innate potentiality of universality. This does not imply that the Church must necessarily excel in numbers and vastness of territory. Her oneness of thought, including permanently so many people of different times, of different climes, of different tongues, of different character in one and the same faith, constitutes her spiritual universality, of which visible universality is but the external manifestation. However small the numbers to which apostasy might reduce her, however narrow the limits within which persecution may confine her, there will always shine on her brow that star which proclaims that she is the Church of all times and of all nations.

The objection has been made: If the claims of the Catholic Church are so self-evident, if she is divinely instituted, why is it that not all non-Catholics flock to her bosom? The answer is: because passion, prejudice, and ignorance prevent men from doing so. Anyone having but a superficial knowledge of Protestant literature and non-Catholic mentality is shocked by the prevalence of prejudice and ignorance regarding Catholic teachings and practices. It is almost incredible with what persistency the most absurd views and rumors live on among the non-Catholic population. Amusing examples of such distorted views may be found in the excellent book *Alias Oves Habeo*, by Ambrose Reger, O.S.B.<sup>9</sup> Attention need but be called to the chapters "Bigotry and Ignorance," "Bigotry and Malice." What is said here of the United States applies equally to other countries.

No greater exposé of the existence in English letters of a virulent anti-Catholic tradition exists than that which John Henry Newman gave as early as 1851, when he published his *Lectures on the Present Position of Catholics in England*. Spurred on by hatred and fear rather than by the spirit of fairmindedness, the English govern-

<sup>9</sup> New York: Pustet, 1928.

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ment, from the time of James I and Elizabeth, carried on in all its territories, for more than two centuries, an unrelenting campaign of propaganda against the Church. Aided by all the Protestant sects, it suppressed every attempt on the part of the Church to secure a fair hearing.

In Colonial America the various Protestant sects, while spreading the doctrines of "toleration," used the weapons of pulpit and press to secure anti-Catholic legislation, and to promote an adverse public opinion, so intolerable, so tainted with bigotry, that a century and a half under the United States' Constitution has not eradicated it. A summary of the causes of this bigotry as well as of its effects in Colonial America, based on original sources preserved in the libraries throughout the United States, is given in the book *American Opinion of Roman Catholicism in the Eighteenth Century*, by Sister Mary Augustina Ray, B.V.M., Ph.D.<sup>10</sup> The open-minded reader of this book will certainly agree with the authoress that, "given such opinions with such derivations, the wonder is not that the Roman Catholics have been the subject of Religious discriminations, but that these have been removed as quickly and as completely as they have."

The second great hindrance in the conversion of non-Catholics is the bad example of lukewarm and renegade Catholics. Comparatively few people are able to find a plausible explanation for the glaring discrepancy existing between the lives of defaulting Catholics and the lofty teachings of the Church. They argue that the lives of such people disprove the claims of the Church without realizing that membership in the Church does not automatically bring about a certain degree of virtuousness and impeccability. Still it remains a deplorable fact, especially in its effect upon non-Catholics, that "men will wrangle for religion; write for it; fight for it; die for it; anything

<sup>10</sup> New York: Columbia University Press, 1937.



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but — live for it.”<sup>11</sup> Not that good Catholics are scarce. No, they are indeed as plentiful as ever, but outsiders are always more inclined to judge the Church by her bad members than by her good ones.

The autobiographies of modern converts of both sexes which are included in this volume have been contributed to it from all parts of the world. Twenty-two different nations are represented. Some of the writers are converts in a broader sense of the word, inasmuch as they were baptized Catholics and strayed away into unbelief, from whence they returned to the faith of their youth. The unpretentious contributions are as a whole devoid both of logic chopping and emotional excitement. Most of the converts who contributed to this series did so only very reluctantly. They finally consented in order to give praise to God and be of assistance to those groping for the truth, mindful of the words of Holy Writ: “It is good to hide the secret of a king; but honorable to reveal and confess the works of God” (Tob. 12:7). To all of them we extend our heartfelt thanks for making this volume possible.

Naturally, all contributions which might have been of interest to the public could not be incorporated here. In the first place it was impossible to contact every distinguished convert; secondly, not all were willing to write; and thirdly, not all desirable contributions could be accepted without making the volume too bulky. These facts, therefore, may serve to anticipate the objection that any particular convert ought not to have been omitted. It is important, also, to state that with few exceptions all contributors are still living at the publication of this book.

The inclusion of stories from members of any and all races that could be represented here will not be objected to by true Christians. “For you are all the children of God by faith, in Christ Jesus,” St. Paul wrote to the Galatians.

<sup>11</sup> C. C. Colton in *Lacon*, Vol. I.

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"For as many of you as have been baptized in Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek; there is neither bond nor free; there is neither male nor female. For you are all one in Christ Jesus" (3:26).

From the *Apologia pro Vita Sua*,<sup>12</sup> by John Henry Newman, on to the publication by John Moody of *My Long Road Home*,<sup>13</sup> countless books and articles written by or about converts have appeared in many countries. We need but mention the German compilation by D. A. Rosenthal, *Konvertitenbilder aus dem 19ten Jahrhundert*,<sup>14</sup> and the more recent German work by Adrian Werburg, *Ihre Wege nach Rom*.<sup>15</sup> In addition we have the bimonthly, *Die Friedensstadt*, Paderborn, and the Viennese monthly, *Der Eucharistische Voelkerbund*, both of which periodicals are working for a reunion in faith. Articles dealing with converts have also been published in the Vatican newspaper *Osservatore Romano*,<sup>16</sup> in the Spanish newspapers *El Debate* and *El Siglo Futuro*, both of Madrid; in the two French collections, *Les Temoins du Renouveau Catholique* and *Les Temoignage des Apostats*, both published at Paris; in the Dutch periodicals *Het Schild* of 's Hertogenbosch and in the *Apologetisch Leven* of Driebergen. Further, we may add the Norse weekly *Nordisk Ugeblad for Katolske Kristne*, Denmark; *The Universe* and *The Catholic Herald*, both of London; *The Commonweal*, *America*, *The Epistle*, all of New York; *The Lamp* of Peekskill, New York, and the *Voice of the Church*, Lisle, Illinois.

A collection of short autobiographies of Jewish converts alone, under the title *Why Jews Become Catholics*, was published at New York in 1924.

Finally, compilations similar to the present have been

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<sup>12</sup> London, 1865.

<sup>13</sup> New York, 1933.

<sup>14</sup> Regensburg, 1889, 1892, 1902.

<sup>15</sup> Paderborn, 1929.

<sup>16</sup> Città del Vaticano.



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published in other countries; namely, *Conversions to the Catholic Church*,<sup>17</sup> *Menschen, die zur Kirche kamen*,<sup>18</sup> and *De Sokte de Gamle Stier*.<sup>19</sup> Of the last-mentioned three volumes only the second, by Severin Lamping, O.F.M., deals with forty-two modern converts of twenty-one different nationalities. Of these accounts thirty-three are identical with the contributions to the present volume.

The narratives contained in the book now offered here are rendered unabridged, and in the case of foreign contribution, in literal renditions, plain and straightforward as the originals. The attempt to interpret the individual contributions is left to the reader. May they speak for themselves. To all who assisted in making the necessary translations our grateful indebtedness and sincere appreciation are herewith expressed. In this regard a special word of thanks is due to the Right Honorable Countess Ann zu Stolberg-Wernigerode and to the editor of *St. Ansgar's Bulletin*, Miss Catherine O'Neill. Likewise we wish to make grateful acknowledgment to the publishers Burns, Oates and Washbourne of London, England, for the kind permission to reprint the stories of the Rev. Owen Francis Dudley and Sheila Kaye-Smith from *Conversions to the Catholic Church*.

As a matter of fact the following autobiographies, which rather give us first impressions than the analysis of a religious metamorphosis, are not to be regarded as presenting in themselves a satisfactory explanation of that supernatural phenomenon which we call a conversion. A conversion is more than an intellectual sequence. It is primarily and essentially the work of God's grace, which no man can fathom and much less describe. The convert himself is apt to confuse in retrospect the intellectual and religious, and perhaps even the emotional process through which he has passed, with what has actually hap-

<sup>17</sup> London, 1933.

<sup>18</sup> Munich, 1935.

<sup>19</sup> Oslo, 1936.

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pened. Literary accounts of conversions are, as a rule, interesting pieces of autobiography — and perhaps bad theology. The reader should, therefore, discount to a certain extent the personal element in the following autobiographies inasmuch as it might divert his mind from the wondrous operations of God's grace.

If terms that sound somewhat harsh occur at times in reference to non-Catholic beliefs they should not in any instance be taken as implying a condemnation of sincere non-Catholics. The familiar quotation of St. Cyprian († 258), *Extra ecclesiam nulla salus* — "Outside of the Church there is no salvation,"<sup>20</sup> does not imply that according to Catholic teaching all not within the pale of the visible Church will be damned. It merely emphasizes that the Catholic Church, as the living Christ among us, constitutes in its truths and means of grace the one certified way to eternal salvation. A baptized non-Catholic who does not know the Church but complies with his religious obligations according to his lights belongs in a spiritual way to the Church. Indeed, he even partakes in part of her graces in virtue of which he can be saved. Consequently the word of St. Cyprian should not be misunderstood. There are undoubtedly many non-Catholics who rank higher in the sight of God than many Catholics. The Catholic Church, therefore, does not receive converts to the faith like sinners, but like children who have strayed away and are returning to the household. With what solicitude and love the Catholic Church remembers her separated brethren is evident from the encyclicals written by Pope Pius IX in 1854 and in 1863, from the exhortation *Longinqua Oceani*, addressed by Pope Leo XIII to the American hierarchy in the year 1895, and the encyclical *Mortalium Animos* of Pope Pius XI, issued in 1928.

Bigheartedness as well as a sympathetic attitude toward

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<sup>20</sup> *De Unitate Ecclesiae*.



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non-Catholics ought to be the distinctive mark of all Catholics in the effort to abolish existing obstacles to Christian unity. It is not the Protestants only who have distorted facts. An immense step forward would be taken if Catholics and Protestants alike discarded from their writings whatsoever is unfair, rude, or unkind. Instead of ceaseless recrimination, by which mutual irritation is kept up, we should calmly and loyally appeal to each other for such rectification as truth demands. Moreover, all Catholics should consider it a moral obligation incumbent upon them to work for a reunion in faith, in gratitude for their calling to the true Church.

In a sense all Catholics are "converts." No one is "born" a Catholic, although he may be born of Catholic parents, with a Catholic heritage and environment. He is born, as it were, on the threshold of the Church. If all Catholics realized their responsibility resulting from this preferential position the spiritual plight of their separated brethren would be for them a matter of grave concern. "If there were only one Catholic in the world," writes Monsignor Lavelle in the *St. Anthony Messenger*, March, 1938, "and if he made only one convert a year, and if each convert would do the same, under the laws of geometrical progression every one in the world would be Catholic at the end of thirty-two years."

In spite of a certain prevalent lethargy on the part of Catholics it is safe to say that no one mourns the disunion of Christendom more than the sincere Catholic. Even Adolf von Harnack, the most influential Protestant theologian of his day, once wrote: "I believe it correct to say: the sincere Catholic has a more vivid appreciation of a great Christian community, a keener sorrow in view of the Christian disunity, and a greater sense of responsibility in face of the problems confronting us, than we Protestants."<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> *Reden und Aufsätze*, II, Giessen, 1906.

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The desire for religious unity has also become increasingly urgent among Protestants and is testified to in particular by the Protestant World Conferences at Stockholm (1925), Lausanne (1927), and Edinburgh (1937). At the last-mentioned gathering the most significant words of the final declaration, drafted by a committee, are undoubtedly the following: "We humbly acknowledge our divisions are contrary to the will of Christ, and we pray God for unity."

None have sung the praise of their Mother Church more eloquently than the converts to Catholicism. Like a mighty chorus their voices rise from all parts of the globe, uniting in one jubilant hymn of praise at having found their Mother. Ardently they plead for that unity whose preservation Christ Himself asked of His heavenly Father in that memorable hour before His passion: *Ut omnes unum sint*, "That they all may be one" (John 17:21). But though the Church may be a Mother to all who cling to her, yet in her strength she is built on the adamant rock that rises from the surging flood, defying time and all the forces of disintegration. She is and always has been God's bulwark for the salvation of mankind. Only through her can the passing generations find a new orientation and work out most perfectly their temporal and spiritual betterment.

You are like a rock that plunges into eternity, but the generation  
of my day is like sand that falls into nothingness.  
It is like dust that whirls about itself.  
It has raised its blood to be a law of the spirit and the name  
of its people to a divinity.  
Because of this you lie as a hoar-frost on the forests of its dreams  
and like snow on the lofty cedars of its pride.  
For you bow not your neck to the yoke men would put upon it,  
nor will you lend your voice to their error.  
You throw nations down before you that you may save them.  
You bid them rise up that they may work their salvation.  
See, their boundaries are like a wall of shadow in your sight,  
and the roar of their hate is like laughter.



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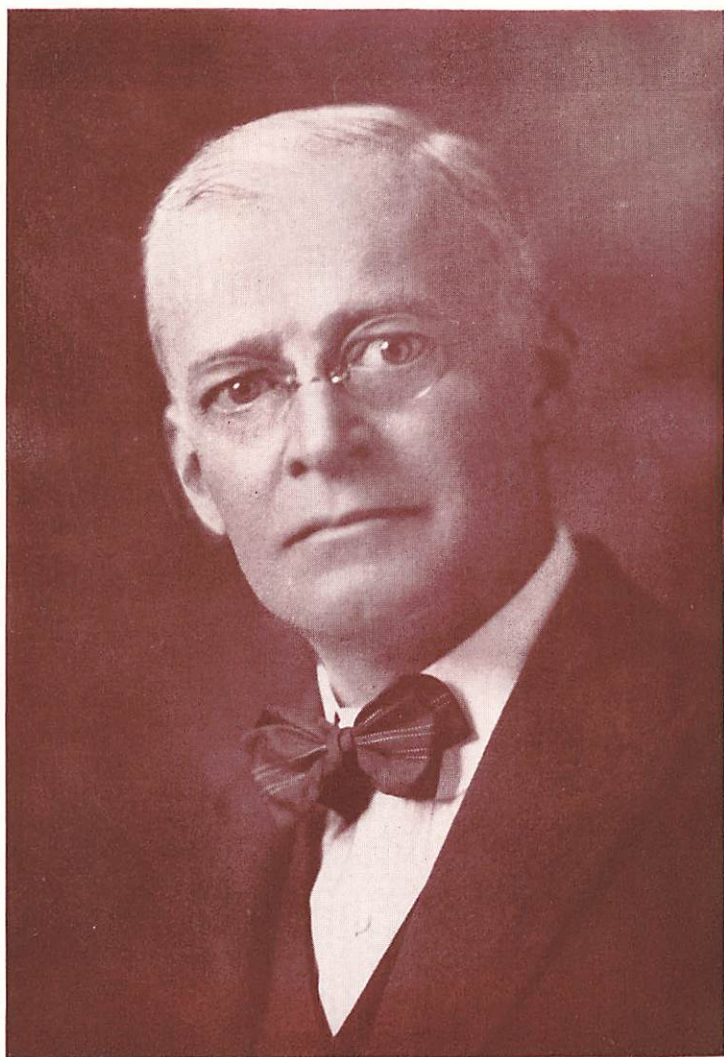
The clash of their weapons is like tinkling glass and their victories are as tapers in small chambers.

But your victory stretches from morning until evening and your wings spread over every sea.

Your arms enfold men of every color and your breath blows over all generations.

Your boundaries are without boundaries, for you carry in your heart the compassion of the Lord.

— From *Hymns to the Church*, by Gertrud von Le Fort, translated by Margaret Chanler (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1937).



John L. Moody



1

AS A LITTLE CHILD

JOHN MOODY

SOMETIMES, when converts are asked to state, in brief, how they came to embrace the Catholic Faith, they have replied, "I became as a little child again." I once gave that reply to a man who asked me to state my reasons "on a post card." It is the right reply; no one can become a Catholic, really, unless he does just that. But what does it mean to "become as a little child again"? To determine its meaning, at least in part, we might reflect a bit on our own childhood days, and try to recall how our child mentality functioned before it had become warped by contact with the world. Let me briefly sketch my own child mentality as, on reflection, it comes back to me.

Above all else, it was tempered by wonder. As a small boy I often wondered at my animated self. How was it possible that my little body could actually be a living, moving thing? Whence came its power? What made it "go"? I would think of my father's watch — a wonderful machine. But my own body-machine beat that, for the watch couldn't start unless someone wound it up, and couldn't keep going unless someone wound it every day. But not so my little body; it was always moving. Moreover, it grew up; grew in size, grew by itself.

How could all this be? What were men and women, boys and girls, anyway? How did they come to be like that? Why were they here? What were they for? And most puzzling of all, why did they live just about so long — fifty, sixty, seventy years or even less — and then die? How

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they started was one great mystery, but why they stopped, never to go again, was a still greater mystery.

At all these puzzling things I wondered and wondered. Nobody could ever seem to clearly explain them. Someone might say, "Your body is animated by your soul; without your soul your body could not move; it would be 'dead.'" But what was my soul, and why and how did it have this effect on my body?

There were even deeper mysteries than these to wonder about. I was not only a moving, self-propelling machine, but a thinking, feeling machine also. I could think, and laugh, and talk, and cry; I could speak the truth, or lie; I could dream and imagine things; I could love and I could hate. And overtopping all these wondrous things about myself, was the fact that I could decide when and how to exercise these powers. The watch, when wound up, had to go on; it couldn't stop and start at its own choosing. But I was a self-starter and a self-stopper; I had a mysterious something called a "will" — which I could always use when I wanted to.

Of course I was told that all these things were "natural"; it was all in accord with the "laws of nature." But what was nature? What, really, were the mind, the heart, the five senses? How did they come to be? Nobody seemed to know, exactly. And so as I lived on, I continued to be confronted by mystery; we were all living in mystery — father, mother, brothers, and sisters — everybody.

Then, as I grew older, I began to lose this sense of wonder. For in the life of every growing child the time is sure to come when modern "enlightenment" appears upon the scene, and begins to intrigue his mind, claiming to solve all mystery for him. This "enlightenment" is often met with in the books he early comes to read. During his childhood he has of course been taught that back of all the wonders of his mind and body, back of all the wonders that surround his life, there dwells a Major



Wonder; a Transcendent Being who is the Creator and Father of us all. This Major Wonder (Almighty God) he has come to strongly believe in, and this belief has kept him sane and balanced during all his early years. Faith in a supernatural purpose and end for man has been the bulwark back of all his striving.

But in time he has left his childhood far behind, with its dreams and visions, its faith and trust. Now he begins to hear, to his dismay, that there is no Major Wonder, no Creator and Father of us all. And if he listens long enough he will learn that he has no soul, no free will, no immortal destiny ahead, and when he dies, that will be the end of him. And so, though reluctantly, perhaps, he may in time decide to take his place in the thronging procession of the "enlightened."

As I read over these last two paragraphs, I realize how exactly they portray my own personal evolution from the simple faith of childhood, to the "enlightenment" of maturity; from the loss of that divine sense of wonder and mystery — to the modern hell of doubt and frustration. And to get away from this hell of doubt and frustration I did indeed have to "become as a little child again" — washing my mind of the incrustations accumulated throughout the years of "enlightenment"; laying aside my foolish notions, prejudices, and false views of life. For only then was it possible for me to find even the starting point of fundamental truth.

In other words, in order to become a Catholic, I had to set aside my much-vaunted worldly wisdom for that higher wisdom, veiled in part in mystery, which is so beautifully reflected in the wonder world of the child mentality. Not by means of emotional "feeling," but by way of the intellect and the will, I had to recover that awareness of mystery, that consciousness of invisible reality — the firm *conviction* that there does exist, in addition to this natural order which we see and feel and touch, an

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unseen and higher world of wonder and of objective truth — the supernatural order.

This, however, is not the full explanation of my conversion to Catholicism; it is only a "post-card answer." But it is a first fundamental for any return to Christianity. Other questions, however, immediately pile up. I am asked, for instance, "Why, in leaving your agnosticism behind, did you jump over Protestantism and choose the Catholic Church, rather than one of the other Christian bodies of the orthodox type?"

The answer to that is easy. Many of these critics freely admit that their own partly self-constituted beliefs are "wobbly and jittery," uncertain and shaky, just as were mine in the old days. Now, after almost a lifetime of holding "wobbly and jittery" notions of truth, I had at last made the discovery that what I was starving for, were not more wish-fancies, as formulated from the views of Tom, Dick, and Harry. What I wanted was some dependable *authority* to guide me to all truth, and correctly interpret it for me. But could such an authority be found? Then I ran across a statement of G. K. Chesterton, in his *Orthodoxy*, published thirty years ago. He said, "Christianity came into the world firstly in order to assert with violence that a man had not only to look inwards, but to look outwards, to behold with astonishment and enthusiasm a Divine Company and a Divine Captain."

From that hour I began to "look outwards." I gave up relying on my inner consciousness; I ceased depending wholly on private judgment. Instead I turned to the storehouse of truth. I had discovered that Truth is One, and is objective, not subjective; and that trying to find it by the "inner light" alone would forever lead to frustration.

To explain more concretely. My whole investigation of the Catholic point of view had been inconclusive and futile until I had definitely begun to seek for the proof



of the infallible authority of the Catholic Church. This at once led me, of course, to an examination of the Catholic Papal question — the Church's claim that she speaks with the infallible authority of Christ. And with what result? Why, of course, I discovered "with astonishment and enthusiasm a Divine Company and a Divine Captain."

Objective facts have always appealed to my more practical side; all my business life has been spent in a place where one's exclusive urge is to secure the facts and get results from them. I have sometimes said it was my Wall Street training that led me into the Catholic Church! And so now, in my accustomed fact-finding way, I dug deeply into the history of the Church; and when I had finished I had discovered the meaning of Catholic Unity, the Oneness of Catholic Truth; the need and the reality of the infallible authority of the Catholic Church.

"I might not be able to believe the Gospel, did not the authority of the Catholic Church move me," said St. Augustine in the fifth century; and a long line of thinkers have been saying the same ever since. At first blush this had looked to me like a "hard saying" — but not so any more. For it is the key to the whole Catholic structure. Without a clear apprehension of the authoritative voice by which the Catholic Church speaks, neither you nor I can really be a Catholic.

Of course I am quite aware that this is disputed by some who profess to be truly "Catholic" in their beliefs — "Anglo-Catholics," for instance. But such people are not living by the Chesterton formula; they are looking inwards and not outwards; they are ignoring the objective facts. It will always be found in such cases that sight has been lost of the fundamental objective foundation on which the Christian Faith forever rests — the Rock of authority — the infallible authority of Christ Himself.

It should be clear to any thinking person who has the slightest understanding of weak human nature, that if

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Christianity had not been erected on this Rock of infallible authority, it would have wholly disappeared from the world as a vital force ages ago; it would only be remembered now as a small, ephemeral sect of primitive times — as are the numerous “mystical cults” of those days. It would have faded away, precisely as it is fading today among those who deny the Divinity of Christ — and thereby deny the infallible authority of His Church.

“Thou art Peter, and upon this Rock I will build My Church; and the gates of hell [error within or without] shall not prevail against it.” Losing sight of this Divine pronouncement is losing sight of the Catholic Faith.



## NOT FOR MENTAL COWARDS

HIS EXCELLENCY BISHOP DUANE G. HUNT

THE convert to the Catholic religion is often misjudged. The sufficiency of his information about Catholicism is doubted, friends usually fearing that he is doomed later in life to be disappointed. It is thought at times that he is attracted by some appeal which is only superficial. It is thought, too, that in embracing the Catholic religion he makes a humiliating surrender of intellectual independence. That such is not true, I think I can prove from my own case, which is fairly ordinary and typical.

I was born and raised in a good non-Catholic home, my parents being practical and devout Christians. From the very first I was taken to church, to Sunday school, and to various church services. At an early age I was introduced to the Bible and grew up with profound respect for it. In time, I was sent to a Christian college, where at first I continued the religious habits of earlier days.

There came a time, however, when for reasons which would be very hard to state, I found myself becoming critical about religion. I recall sitting back in prayer meetings, with a rather detached attitude, making uncomplimentary observations about the extemporaneous prayers and the testimonies given by my associates. The emotionalism of revival meetings irritated me, as did also the personal work by which Christian students tried to win over their non-Christian fellows. In the scheme of things as it existed, I felt more and more uncomfortable and out of place.

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Before long I was framing very definite questions about religion. What was I to believe? What was I to do? How was I to worship? From what source could I acquire truth? These became burning questions; they absorbed my thoughts and made me unhappy. By my own inquiries, I could learn the truths of science, of history, and of other natural subjects; but it seemed to me that for religious truths I must turn to God. And how could I do so? Eventually I had to work out an analysis of my problem. Starting with my beliefs in the existence of God and that God is the Author of truth, I figured out that there were only three ways in which God might instruct me. First, God might in some mysterious way teach me directly. Second, He might inspire certain chosen men to write a book, through the pages of which He would speak to me. Third, He might appoint a group of men, teach truth to them, and then authorize them to teach me.

Concerning the first way, I could not find the slightest proof that God had revealed truth to me directly. And it seemed unreasonable to expect Him to do so. If God should reveal religious truths directly to me, He would do the same to others. And if He should reveal truth directly to individuals merely in response to their honest petitions, then, He must have done so to millions of devout persons in the various religions throughout the world. But if that were the case, then, God had revealed contradictory doctrines to different persons. This, of course, was wholly absurd.

The second possibility was a book. Instinctively I turned to the Bible, which I had been reared to respect. I had always assumed that it was the word of God. But when I critically examined the subject I became uncertain. In the first place I was aware that there were many different interpretations of the Bible texts. Different Christian denominations drew conflicting doctrines from the same chapter, even from the same verse. Which



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interpretation and which doctrine were correct?

To make matters worse, it wasn't long before I raised the question: How did I know that God had inspired the writers of the Bible? I was told that some of the early Christians decided that it was inspired. But how did they know? Did God tell them?

I was told that if I would only read the Bible devoutly, its inspiration would become evident to me. I followed that advice. There were certain passages of the Bible which I admired greatly, but I certainly could not be sure that they were inspired. How was I to know? What test should I apply? At the same time, there were other passages of the Bible which did not appeal to me at all. Was I to regard the former inspired and the latter not inspired? If so, I would be changing the Bible to suit myself.

The third possibility was that God had appointed certain men as agents to instruct me. Presumably, they would be the ministers of some church. But of what church? And how were they to be identified? Surely, if God had appointed agents, they would be clearly marked so as to be recognized. I knew of no such men. Furthermore, if they were to teach as agents of God, they must be infallible. And where was I to find such men?

The more I pondered over such problems, the more confused I became. It seemed hopeless to try to find God's truth, infallibly taught. Problems had created doubts; doubts were destroying faith. I was surely drifting away from the religion of my youth.

It was in this frame of mind that I was given some books explaining the Catholic religion. I remember clearly the scorn and contempt with which I began to read them. I was so sure that the Catholic religion was wrong that I felt perfectly confident of finding a host of errors and contradictions. In reading the books, however, I discovered that the Catholic Church at least had answers

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to my questions. While I did not take them seriously at first, I noted and remembered them. I remember at one time saying to myself: "It is a shame that the Catholic Church is so terribly bad, because its arguments are so logical."

You see, I had heard so many awful things about the Catholic Church that I was prejudiced. I had been taught to believe that, while the Catholic Church for a few centuries was holy and faithful, she later became corrupt, with bishops and popes falling into terrible scandals. The moment, therefore, that I thought seriously about the Catholic religion I had to weigh such accusations.

As well as I could, I did so. To my great surprise, I found that the accusations against the Church could not be proved. I mention one illustration, as typical of others. A friend gave me a pamphlet in which the author tried to prove that St. Peter was never in Rome. He asserted most confidently, in the light of his argument, that the primary claims of the Catholic Church were false. I read the pamphlet, and then read some Catholic literature on the same subject. I found that the Catholic Church could support her claim by a mass of evidence, from the best of non-Catholic historians. The result was, of course, that I had more respect for the Catholic Church after the incident than I had before. It was precisely the same with every subject I looked into, whether it was criticism of the confessional, of indulgences, of the Knights of Columbus, or Catholic education, or of anything else concerning the Catholic religion.

At one stage in my floundering about I began to doubt the divinity of Christ. And I deliberately magnified that doubt because I wished to keep out of the Catholic Church. That may sound strange to you, but it is true. I assured myself that the Church must be wrong, and that it must have fallen into false doctrines and evil ways. Such being the case, evidently God had not protected the



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Church against failure. But it was only a matter of history that Christ had promised that His Church would not fail. If it had failed, then, Christ had not protected her. He had failed in His promise. If so, obviously, He was not divine, but was only a man, and a fanatical man at that.

In my desire to remain outside the Catholic Church, I was caught in the trap of my own prejudices. If I accepted the charge that the Church had failed, I was doomed to reject the divinity of Christ. If I did that, I was through with Christianity and every Christian church. If so, where could I look for truth? Yet if I accepted the divinity of Christ, I was headed for the Catholic Church.

Sooner or later, I was compelled to study seriously the subject of Christ's divinity. As the result of that study, to make a long story short, I had to admit that the divinity of Christ was demonstrated, and that I could not honestly reject it. And then I was brought up squarely against the Catholic Church again. Christ was divine; He established His Church and guaranteed that it would not fail; from these facts there was no escape; therefore, He had protected His Church against failure. Therefore, His Church was still in the world, teaching truth infallibly. Try as much as I would, I could not close my mind to that conclusion.

To escape from the inevitable, I read the worst books I could find against the Catholic Church, I went most regularly to other churches, I taught in Sunday school, and identified myself with church societies; all with the hope that I could keep myself satisfied and happy outside the Catholic Church.

It was during a postgraduate course in law school that I finally made up my mind that I must be and would be honest with myself, and that since logic led me unmistakably to the Catholic Church, I would follow. I could not be a mental coward. I came into the Catholic Church, therefore, because I could not stay out.

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The Catholic Church fitted in perfectly with my original analysis. Evidently God did not reveal truth to me directly. No doubt He had revealed truth to the writers of the Bible, but so that the reader would not be led into error He had appointed the officials of His Church to interpret the Bible correctly. The officials of the Church were closely marked as the agents of God, because they were the successors of the Apostles, of those men whom Christ had personally appointed to teach infallibly. They were, as I discovered, the bishops of the Catholic Church.



## HIS INVISIBLE PRESENCE

AUGUSTINE J. ROTH

THE question how and why I became a Catholic has been asked of me no less than a score of times and, much as I would like to answer it in a brief and simple manner, I am unable to do so. Had I been open-minded in my Protestant days, the answer to this question would be quite simple and probably all that I would mention would be that I was impressed by the devotion of some Catholics of my acquaintance, or that I met a priest or nun who gave me some books on the Catholic Church. However, since I was a bigot of such intensity that I did not number among my acquaintances even one Catholic, I cannot answer the above question without some length.

When I found myself out of harmony with the doctrines of the Baptist church I began an investigation of the doctrines of other non-Catholic churches, which lasted for six years. This investigation was made to determine if any other church contained doctrines to which I could subscribe wholeheartedly. Still, I had not the remotest idea that this investigation would lead me to the Catholic Church, for I hated the Catholic Church so thoroughly that I would have abandoned the inquiry even though it meant staking my salvation and losing what little faith I had left. That I took the step, nevertheless, later on, is a proof for the mysterious working of God's grace in my life, which took me step by step through the emptiness of the other churches and then bestowed upon me the greatest of all gifts, the gift of Faith.

## *His Invisible Presence*

This is the real answer to the question: How I became a Catholic. The answer to the other question, why I became a Catholic, can be summed up in a few words. I became a Catholic because after an extensive investigation lasting six years I found the Catholic Church to be the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church. I became a Catholic for the same reason that nearly a half of a million souls became Catholics last year, for no man can know the true Church and feel content to remain outside of her communion.

My own conversion came about in a very unusual manner, and I may call myself, in truth, a convert of the Blessed Sacrament. After six years of searching for food for my soul and trying to revive a faith that was slowly but surely dying, because instead of bread I was given a stone, God drew me to Himself. After six years of wandering through an abysmal darkness of sects and isms, strife and discord, doubts and fears, I had about decided that the search for truth was a hopeless task. It was at this time that I was invited into the Cathedral in Springfield, Illinois, by Father J. A. O'Brien. I had never before in my life set foot inside a Catholic Church; I knew absolutely nothing of the Sacraments or Sacramentals save what was taught to us in our own seminaries, and that was not complimentary to the Blessed Sacrament. But the moment I stepped across the threshold of that Church and stood before the Blessed Sacrament for the first time, I felt within me that I stood in the very presence of Christ. True, I did not know at the time that He was present in the Blessed Sacrament on the Altar, but I did feel the definite assurance that He was present somewhere in that Church, for never before did I feel His nearness to me as in that memorable hour.

I knelt down and prayed. There at the feet of the Master I poured out the burden of my soul, and as I prayed I felt that burden being lifted from me. For the



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first time in many years I felt the joy of a satisfied soul and the peace of mind that comes to one who, after journeying through the wilderness of sects and isms, has at last reached the Father's house.

I asked to be received into the Church right then and there, but naturally that was impossible. The reasoning of the Catholic priest impressed me. After telling me that a period of instruction would be necessary and assuring me that nothing would give him greater joy than to begin immediately, he did impress upon me what a great sacrifice a conversion involved. When I left him that evening he gave me a few books to take home with me. He chose very wisely, for when I arrived home and opened the package I found a short biography of Cardinal Newman.

It seems strange to have to admit that I had no knowledge of the great Newman being a convert. Many times, in my own church, we had sung "Lead Kindly Light," and all I knew of the author was that his name, or her name, was J. H. Newman. At least more was not mentioned in our hymnals. For one thing, I never dreamed that this very song was a prayer for guidance from the heart of one, who like myself, found a great void in his soul that his own church could not satisfy. Among the other books Father O'Brien had given me was also *Rebuilding a Lost Faith* by John L. Stoddard, another convert. Here too I received a jolt, for had any man ever told me that such a book could be written by a convert in appreciation and in defense of his Faith, I would not have believed it. A third book entitled *Where We Got the Bible*, by Graham, convinced me that all my seminary training had been a waste of time, for not until I had read this book did I realize how little I knew about the Bible I had been preaching for over seven years. So carefully are the true facts hidden from men who are studying for the ministry.

So thoroughly engrossed did I become in these books

## *His Invisible Presence*

that I remained awake the entire night reading them. In the morning I told my wife about my visit with the priest, of my experience before the Blessed Sacrament, and of the books that I had read, but she was by no means in sympathy with my attitude. She asked me to go no further, for if I did, it would bring disgrace on the family, and if I did become a Catholic, she would take our baby and return home; that she would never want to see or hear from me again until I came back asking the forgiveness of my people.

I had often heard of people facing a crisis; now I was facing one myself. I realized that if I followed the voice of God in my soul I would certainly lose my wife and child whom I loved dearly, and if I kept them, I would necessarily lose my immortal soul. I then went through the libraries reading all of the non-Catholic books that I could find, hoping against hope that I might find a loophole of escape, but though I read with a passion, I found that every statement made by the priest and by the writers of the books he had given me, could be substantiated by non-Catholic theologians of standing. I then placed my hand into His pierced hand and asked Him to give me the grace of perseverance to follow Him. And He failed me not.

Then came a period of persecution on the part of my relatives and acquaintances such as one can hardly imagine possible in the twentieth century. However, I always found strength in the promises of our Lord.

Without my knowledge my wife, who had left me, wrote to the Sisters with whom I had been living and after about five months she returned to me and I had the great joy of seeing my wife and babe baptized in the same holy Faith. In the meantime, many others, who persecuted me, have been received into the Catholic Church.

I have been in the Church now for over five years and each day finds me more deeply rooted in her holy soil



*Augustine J. Roth*

than the day before. Here I find a Bible that is untampered with and a glorious tradition, for the Catholic Church has been acting as witness since the day when Christ walked on earth. She was present at the Last Supper, when the Sacrament of Holy Eucharist was instituted; she was present when Christ stood before Pilate; she was present at the crucifixion and again at the resurrection; she was with the first Christians in the Catacombs, in their prisons of shame, in the arenas of torture.

Through nearly two thousand years she has steered a straight and narrow course between the cold and barren peaks of bigotry and prejudice. She has seen nations rise to the peak of power and then fall into decay. Thousands have come forth to hurl their handfuls of sand against the solid rock on which her Divine Founder placed her. Her enemies have flourished for their short season, and like the leaves of the forest they have fallen and withered. She has seen those who persecuted her strut their brief moments and then perish, and she will live on and on as the greatest civilizing force the world has ever known, for she has the promise of Christ: "And behold I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the world."

I came and asked for bread, and I was given the Bread of Life. I have the privilege of communing daily with that noble company of saints and martyrs whose blood has been the seed of new Christians. In this company I shall march onward until I reach the goal that is before me. There are no more doubts, no more fears, no more empty meaningless sects. I have found the Father's house.

## A RACE WELL RUN

RALPH H. METCALFE

THERE is much satisfaction, I can say, to be derived from winning a sprint race from some of the greatest runners in the world. There is a happy moment when one learns that he has equaled or broken a record. There are pleasures in the fine contacts which can be developed in athletic competition. There are flattering newspaper comments which one naturally likes to read but which, I might say, must be taken with the proverbial grain of salt.

But none of these, none of the glories and honors that have come my way because I happen to have had some success in running, can compare with the pleasurable thrill that was sincerely mine when I realized, for the first time, that I was a Catholic. I have found a new happiness in my religion, an undreamed-of consolation in my prayers. My conversion, very likely, was the most important single act in my whole life and I surely have no regrets.

It may seem odd or unusual to many readers to hear of a Negro convert to the True Church, particularly in the United States. My race, however, is a rich field for domestic missionaries, cultivated more and more, and with increasing success. There has been some splendid work accomplished among my people in the cause of Catholicity. Schools and churches for colored parishioners testify to that fact.

I may say that I had no particularly difficult obstacles



## *Ralph H. Metcalfe*

to overcome in approaching Catholicism. It was not my ill fortune, as it is with all too many converts, to overcome parental and home objections. As a matter of fact, my dear mother was a convert to the Faith before me. Residing in Chicago, Illinois, our home, she had become interested in the Church because she had friends of her own, both white and black, who were of the Faith. She was impressed by their sincerity of purpose, their zealotness, their calmness in travail because of their religion.

It was at that time, while I was yet a high-school student, that I became more than casually interested in the Catholic Church. This fact was one factor that determined my matriculation at Marquette University in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, because it is a Catholic school directed by the Jesuit Fathers.

My conversion didn't come, as some of my non-Catholic friends have intimated, through undue influence on the part of the Jesuit Fathers. Nor was it the result of urging by my friends on the athletic teams or in classes. Long before enrolling at Marquette, as I have said, I had become interested in the Church and my observations at the university only confirmed many conclusions which I had previously formed.

On a trip with the Marquette track team late in the winter of 1932, I confided my "great idea" to a warm personal friend on the squad. He was enthusiastic in his congratulations and urged immediate instructions. "But I haven't the time now," I protested. "Too much class-work, too much track practice. I want to approach Catholicity with both eyes opened."

But my friend persisted. He passed on the information to the Rev. John P. Markoe, S.J., then director of the men's Sodality at Marquette and a "man's man" in the eye of every Marquette student. So I went to him.

Father Markoe was splendid. I had no misgivings about the step I was taking, but I felt it was a bit tremen-

## *A Race Well Run*

dous. Through private instruction Father Markoe made things comparatively simple. He first showed me why the Catholic Church is the true Church and then instructed me in its beliefs and practices. There were others, too, who took an interest in me. All along the line, not only in religious matters but in scholastic as well, I have found a fine spirit of cooperation between students and faculty members at Marquette. That is one reason why I remained happy and satisfied while at school.

So I was received into the Church, just slightly more than a year ago as these lines are being written. My Confirmation day was a happy one for me, no happier, however, than December 8, 1932, when I was received into the Sodality of the Blessed Virgin Mary. It has been my good fortune, since, to have been elected treasurer of that organization, an honor from my fellow students, which I duly appreciate.

I attend the Church of St. Benedict the Moor, colored mission, not so far off the Marquette campus. And, more often than not, I am accompanied there by one of my non-Catholic Negro friends from the Marquette student body.

Catholicity has opened my eyes. It has brought me new happiness. It has consoled me and heartened me. I rely on prayer in my athletic and class efforts, as much as I do in my physical and mental abilities. And my plea to heaven at the moment is that I may ever remain faithful to the Church.



## 5

### CROSSING THE GOAL LINE

KNUTE ROCKNE

I USED to be impressed at the sight of my players receiving Holy Communion every morning, and finally I made it a point to go to Mass with them on the morning of the game. I realized that it appeared more or less incongruous when we arrived in town for a game, for the general public to see my boys rushing off to church as soon as they got off the train, while their coach rode to the hotel and took his ease. So for the sake of appearance, if nothing else, I made it a point to go to church with the boys on the morning of a game.

One night before a big game in the East, I was nervous and worried about the outcome of the game the next day and was unable to sleep. I tossed and rolled about the bed and finally decided that I'd get up and dress, then go down to the lobby and sit in a chair alone with my thoughts. It must have been two or three o'clock in the morning when I arrived in the deserted lobby, so I took a chair and tried to get that football game off my mind by engaging some bellboys in conversation.

Along about five or six o'clock in the morning, I started pacing the lobby of the hotel, when suddenly I ran into two of my own players hurrying out. I asked one of them where they were going at such an hour, although I had a good idea. Then I retired to a chair in the lobby where I couldn't be seen, but where I could see everyone who went in or out of the door. Within the next few minutes, my players kept hurrying out of the door in pairs or

## *Crossing The Goal Line*

groups, and finally, when they were about all gone, I got near the door so I could question the next player who came along.

In a minute or two, the last of the squad hurried out of the elevator and made for the door. I stopped them and asked them if they, too, were going to Mass, and they replied that they were. I decided to go along with them. Although they probably did not realize it, these youngsters were making a powerful impression on me with their piety and devotion, and when I saw all of them walking to the Communion rail to receive, and realized the several hours of sleep they had sacrificed in order to do this, I understood for the first time what a powerfully their religion was to those boys in their work on the football field. Then it was that I really began to see the light; to know what was missing in my life, and later on I had the great pleasure of joining my boys at the Communion rail.



## MY CATHOLIC NEIGHBOR

DR. SAM ATKINSON

THE story of my conversion is very simply told. I was a scientific Socialist who believed that everybody should be shaken loose from all preconceived ideas. I lectured extensively for the Socialist party of the United States and was for some time the provincial organizer for the Social Democratic Party of Canada. My father was a Baptist minister in England, where I was born. Coming to Canada over thirty years ago, I trained for the work of an Evangelist and, as is customary on this side of the Atlantic, I preached for any or all of the denominations. I could not accept the Hyper-Calvinism of the strict Baptist denomination to which my father belonged. But I had been brought up to accept those English traditions, handed down from father to son since the Reformation, in reference to the Catholic Church, and therefore knew nothing of Catholicism except these false ideas.

The multiplicity of sects and denominations in the United States of America is appalling. It seems as if every Hindu cult, every new philosophical idea, and every crazy religious conception can get a foothold over here. The people of Canada pride themselves upon their British connections and are not easily carried away.

In my book *My Catholic Neighbours* I tell in detail the story of my background, my conversion, and how, through reason, I carefully examined the teachings and doctrines of the One True Church. I became interested in the study of Catholic teachings as the result of a chal-

## *My Catholic Neighbor*

lenge from a Catholic priest. As a Rationalist lecturer I had examined the philosophies and teachings of almost all the various cults. This priest, the Rev. Father Finn of Rockford, Illinois, heard me lecture before an educational group and invited me to take tea with him that afternoon at the rectory of the Pro-Cathedral. After tea, we had a very lengthy discussion in which he said: "Mr. Atkinson, you seem to be familiar with all the religions in the world except the teachings of the Catholic Church. Do you realize that in the United States there are 20,000,000 Catholics, and that in your own country of Canada out of a population of 10,000,000 people there are almost 4,000,000 Catholics? These people are your neighbors! When you study Confucianism you go to Confucius. Have you gone to Catholic authorities for your knowledge of Catholic teachings? I think you owe it to these neighbors of yours to find out what they really believe. To do that you must go to their own authorities." Then pointing his finger at me he said: "Mr. Atkinson, I do not believe that you are the kind of man who will willfully bear false witness against his neighbor. I am going to give you a list of books and I am going to ask you to read them."

As a result of this conversation I began to make a thorough study of the Catholic teaching. Space will not permit me to record the number of books I read, but it was not the reading of books that led me to the door of the One True Church.

My reading of so-called scientific socialistic literature, my acceptance of a mere materialistic conception of history, had made me virtually a philosophical anarchist. I regarded God as an idea. I looked upon Jesus of Nazareth merely as a great teacher. I thought the Virgin-born story was a myth. Not believing in the existence of God, I could not acquire faith by merely reading about it. I had been looking for a way in which to solve the problems of



our complex life. I could not find it, and no man will ever find it until he recognizes that faith is the gift of God.

I kept faith with Father Finn and read the books according to promise. When next I visited Rockford, intending to call upon him, I found out that he was dead. I met Father Whalen of St. Mary's upon the street and he informed me of Father Finn's death. As I had a speaking engagement in the city that evening, he suggested that I should come to the rectory for a late visit. This I was glad to do. Father Whalen was a victim of the war. I think he had been gassed. Within a few months after my visit with him, he, too, joined the majority.

That evening will stand out in my memory always as one of the most pleasant of my life. We discussed a great many things apart from religion which inspired confidence. He told me that he thought Father Tom had been pressing me too hard on the night of our argument. With a merry twinkle in his eye, he said, "Father Tom was a proselytizer first, last, and all the time." He gave me a better insight into the life of a priest, his duties, his cares, hopes, and longings. There was none of the usual small talk and empty compliments that usually pass between men. He was a master of liberal arts. He quoted Browning, Tennyson, and Whittier to illustrate a point as readily as he would mention some of the early Fathers of the Church. I could not forget for a moment that he was a priest, but he made me feel that he was a brother also. There was no problem I had he did not grasp.

It was nearly two o'clock in the morning when I rose to leave. Quite casually he took my hand and said: "Atkinson, I should like to ask you a very personal question, 'Do you ever pray?' " "Why, Father Whalen," I replied, "I have not said a prayer in ten years." "Well, now," he said, "as one gentleman to another, may I ask you to do me a favor? Will you kneel at your bedside every night and say a little prayer?"

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"But, Father Whalen," I said, "that would be hypocrisy. In the first place I don't believe there is anyone who will hear my prayer, and in the second place I'm not in the frame of mind to make a promise which would be more like a joke to me."

"But, my dear friend," the priest replied, "if there is no God, no harm will be done, therefore you can surely try it."

I stood for a few moments wondering. As one gentleman to another. That was the request. But if there is no God, what is the use of praying and what shall I ask for? I told the priest my quandary. What could I pray for? Father Whalen said: "Just kneel at your bedside, and if you can't think of anything else to say, just say 'God give me light.'"

I returned to the hotel, undressed quickly, turned off the light, and jumped into bed. I lay for a few moments thinking, then there flashed through my mind the words, "As one gentleman to another." Now, I considered myself a gentleman. I had made a promise. Foolishly, perhaps. But whether I was a gentleman or not depended upon whether I kept my word or not. I sprang out of bed, knelt beside it, clasped my hands in the attitude of prayer, and cried, "God give me light," got back into bed with the satisfaction of having, at least, kept my word.

There are some men who seem to have the gift of stirring your very soul. Christ must have had a tremendous insight into the future of His Church when He said to Peter the Fisherman, "Henceforth, thou shalt catch men." A good fisherman once said, "Set your rod and get back. The further you are out of sight, the better are your chances to catch fish." Father Whalen was a true "fisher of men" in this respect. He sank himself. He entered into no discussions. He was not controversial. He did not try to reason with me. He knew that faith is the gift of God. St. Thomas Aquinas said that faith "is an



act of the understanding, adhering to divine truth by command of the will, which is moved by the grace of God." It is called the gift of God, because it depends on the grace of God, which enlightens the mind to see the truth, and moves the will to consent to it. This was bringing me back again to my father's statement. I might read until my brain gave out. I might examine my Catholic neighbor's beliefs merely with the idea that I should not misrepresent them. But the salvation of my soul was the paramount question and I could not believe things divine unless the grace of God moved me. Long afterwards I found out that the following morning, Father Whalen visited the Poor Clares and asked them to pray for my soul's salvation.

I was very, very far from the Church, however, at this time. I had kept my promise faithfully as to my daily prayer, but felt no effects. In fact, it seemed as if life and its problems became darker all the time. Perhaps there is an explanation of it which will sometime be made plain. I had a discussion recently with a man who was arguing against the miracles of our Lord. He used the restoration of sight to the blind man as an illustration. "Why did not Christ simply tell him he could see instead of spitting upon the ground, making clay of the spittle, and then covering his eyes with the clay?" With my experiences in my mind I replied that Christ being God, and being with God from the beginning, would find it the most natural thing to repair a broken optic with the "dust of the earth," since man was originally created from the dust. Further, to illustrate a spiritual truth, Christ, knowing that the majority of blind men have at least a glimmering of light, so that they can at least tell the difference between the light and the dark, decided to make the darkness deeper, so that the light would come to him with greater force, and make the miracle have a mightier significance.

## *My Catholic Neighbor*

I was coming nearer to the light, but the darkness was fearful, and to overcome that I tried to get further and further away from God. Voltaire said: "The more we read, the more we have learned, and the more we have meditated, the better conditioned we are to affirm that we know nothing." As a matter of fact, I was being disturbed by what I read. I found out that the Protestant traditions I had become accustomed to hearing in my boyhood were untrue. I began to realize that man does not see the whole of anything. That a scientist is not a reliable authority outside the particular branch in which he has specialized, and not always in that. The fact that Sir Oliver Lodge was a great scientist did not make him an authority upon religion. That science and religion were two distinct fields. That the mission of the true scientist was not to base his arguments upon hypothetical statements, but to search for a demonstrable fact. That fact must be true. There could therefore be no conflict between the truth of religion and the truth of science. How could I arrive at the truth? Only by being brought into contact with the only source who can guide men into all truth. By a simple little experience I was to learn that "the letter killeth, but the Spirit giveth life."

My wife and I had laid out a garden. We were city dwellers and this was our first garden. We dug it ourselves. We set the seeds ourselves. We put in the shrubbery. We bought little plants and transplanted them. All winter long we had studied pictures of gardens, seed catalogues, designs. When the spring came we had mapped out quite an ambitious program for a couple of amateurs. In all fairness I must admit that my wife did most of the work, but I did what I could in the time I had at my disposal. We walked out in that garden watching for the tender sprouts. Many of them came. One day, when our garden was full of tender little plants and shrubs, there came a violent storm. I was in the city at



the time and everyone remarked about the terrific downpour of rain. I was unusually concerned. What about our garden? The downpour was heavy enough to destroy our young plants. As soon as the storm passed I jumped into my car and drove hurriedly home. By this time the sun was shining. My wife was out in the garden. As I walked across to her she cried: "Look, Sam, we had a terrible storm, but it didn't hurt anything. Not a leaf has been disturbed or a plant broken." In that moment, something took hold of me. Speech left me. The tears poured down my cheeks. When I could, I said: "Isn't it wonderful! That rain might all have dripped at once and ruined this garden. There must be a wonderful intelligence behind the rainfall. There must be a lawmaker behind the law. There *is* a Supreme Being. There *is* a God and I believe in Him. God help my unbelief."

"Not by might, nor by power, but by My Spirit," said the Lord. Father Whalen's method had proved successful. Faith, as a gift of God, had been restored. Immediately all other difficulties passed away. The plan of salvation was clear. God had given His Son to be our salvation. All that I had been reading about the One True Church was clarified. My attitude toward the Catholic Church was changed. Now it was not merely a question of examining the beliefs of my Catholic neighbors. It was a question of seeking to know for my own soul's sake.

The real secret of my misery during the past months was made plain. I had been passing through the deeper darkness. The consciousness that I had betrayed the Christ had been forcing itself upon my mind. I had been running away from God, but relentlessly, the Son of God had been following me, and the Holy Spirit had been working through these experiences to bring conviction to me. Francis Thompson in *The Hound of Heaven* has described such experiences as mine with an insight that is truly remarkable:

## *My Catholic Neighbor*

I fled Him, down the nights and down the days,  
I fled Him down the arches of the years;  
I fled Him down the labyrinthine ways  
Of my own mind; and in the midst of tears  
I hid from Him, and under running laughter.  
Up vistaed hopes I sped;  
And shot, precipitated,  
Adown Titanic Glooms of chasmed fears  
From those strong Feet that followed, followed after,  
But with unhurrying chase,  
And unperturbed pace,  
Deliberate speed, majestic instancy,  
They beat — and a Voice beat  
More instant than the Feet —  
“All things betray thee, who betrayest Me.”

Sometimes I think that every man can find his counterpart among the twelve Apostles. Mine was St. Thomas, doubting Thomas. You remember that after the resurrection eleven of the Apostles were assembled in an upper room, and, “when the doors were shut . . . there stood Jesus in the midst of them.” Thomas did not believe their account of the risen Lord. He was the absent member of the group. When they told him of this visit he would not believe. “Except I shall see in His hands the print of the nails . . . and thrust my hand into His side, I will not believe.” Eight days later the twelve Apostles were assembled in the upper room, and, “the doors being shut . . . there stood Jesus in the midst of them.” Then, when Thomas was able to thrust his hand into the wounded side, he believed. You may shut the door of heart and mind to the Christ, but He is the unescapable Christ. You cannot get away from Him. You may doubt. You may deny. But He is there just the same, seeking the souls of men. Why does He love us so? He might well have said to me:

Alack, thou knowest not  
How little worthy of any love thou art!  
Whom wilt thou find to love ignoble thee,  
Save Me, save only Me?



That indeed is the greatest of all wonders. His love is so unmerited on my part. I have done so much to offend. I am so unworthy. I have sinned much. I have denied Him often. I should never have found Him had He not been seeking me.

"What have you found in the Catholic Church?" I am often asked. The following illustration will answer that question. A little girl lay sick of a fever. As she tossed from side to side upon her bed, her mother did all in her power to relieve her restlessness. She offered the child the juice of an orange, but the little one refused to take it. She pressed a luscious grape against the child's lips, she smoothed the pillow, she did all the kindly little things only a mother thinks of at such a time, but nothing satisfied. Finally, not knowing what to do, she turned down the bedclothes, lifted the little girl out of the bed, and laid her throbbing head against her breast. Heaving a sigh, and looking up with a wistful smile into her mother's face, the little one cried: "Ah, Mother! That's just what I want!"

Folded in the arms of our Holy Mother, the Church, I have found my greatest wants satisfied because, in Her, I have found what I needed most. Peace? Not so much as Truth! Happiness? Not so much as Life — more abundant! Liberty? Not so much as the spirit of self-denial which considers the liberty of another more! Satisfaction? Yes, through Sacrifice!

For all through life I see a cross,  
Where sons of men yield up their breath;  
There is no gain, except by loss,  
There is no life, except by death —  
There is no glory but through shame,  
No honor, but by bearing blame,  
And His eternal passion saith  
Be emptied of glory, and self, and name.

In the Catholic Church I have found how little I am, but how wonderfully great our Saviour is.

## PRACTICAL FAILURE OF ANGLICANISM

REV. OWEN FRANCIS DUDLEY

MY FIRST introduction to the Catholic Church was being spat in the eye by a Roman Catholic boy at school. He was bigger than me; so I let it pass. But I remembered he was a Roman Catholic.

My next was at a magic-lantern entertainment to which I was taken by my mother. In the course of it there appeared on the screen the picture of a very old man in a large hat and a long white soutane. I must have asked my mother who it was, and been informed briefly that it was the "Pope of Rome." I don't quite know how, but the impression left in my mind was that there was something fishy about the "Pope of Rome."

At school, I learned in "English history" (which I discovered later was not altogether English and not altogether history) that there was something fishy not only about the Pope of Rome, but about the whole of the Pope's Church. I gathered that for a thousand years or more the Pope had held all England in his grip, and not only England but all Europe; also that during that period the "Roman," "Romish," or "Roman Catholic" Church had become more and more corrupt, until finally the original Christianity of Christ had almost disappeared; that idols were worshiped instead of God; that everywhere superstition held sway. No education; no science.

I read of how the "Glorious Reformation" had come; how the light of the Morning Star had burst upon the darkness; how the Pope's yoke had been flung off, and



with it all the trappings and corruptions of Popery; of the triumph of the Reformation in England; of the restoration of the primitive doctrines of Christ and the "light of the pure Gospel"; of the progress and prosperity that followed in the reign of "good Queen Bess"; of the freeing of men's minds and the expansion of thought released from the tyranny of Rome.

All this, as an English schoolboy, I drank in. And I believed it.

Next, I did a thing that we all of us have to do; I grew up. And I grew up without questioning the truth of what I had been taught.

The time came when I decided to become a Church of England clergyman. For this purpose I entered an Anglican Theological college. And there I must confess I began to get somewhat muddled; for I could not find out what I should have to teach when I became an Anglican clergyman. Even to my youthful mind it became abundantly clear that my various tutors were contradicting each other on vital matters of Christian doctrine. My own fellow students were perpetually arguing on the most fundamental points of religion. I finally emerged from that theological college feeling somewhat like an addled egg, and only dimly realizing that the Church of England had given me no theology. I appreciated later that it had no system of theology to give.

It was during that period at college that I first of all went out to Rome, on a holiday. And whilst there I managed to see no less a person than the Pope of Rome himself. It was Pope Pius the Tenth — being borne into St. Peter's on the *sedia gestatoria*. He passed quite close to where I was standing, and I could see his face very clearly. It was the face of a saint. I could only suppose that somehow he had managed to keep good in spite of being Pope of Rome. That incident left a deeper impression on my mind than I was aware of at that time.

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I kept a diary of all that I saw in Rome, and wrote in it: "I can quite imagine a susceptible young man being carried away by all this, and wanting to become a Roman Catholic." I myself was safe from the lure of Popery, of course.

As a full-fledged Anglican clergyman, I first of all worked in a country parish. At the end of a year, however, my vicar and I came to the conclusion that it would be wiser to part company; for we were disagreed as to what the Christian religion was.

I then went to a parish in the East End of London, down amongst the costers, hop pickers, and dock laborers. I went down there full of zeal, determined to set the Thames on fire. I very soon discovered, though, that the vast mass of the East-Enders had no interest at all in the religion that I professed. Out of the six thousand or so in the parish not more than one or two hundred ever came near the church. Our hoppers' socials in the parish hall were well patronized, however. Great nights they were, with a thrilling din of barrel organ, dancing, and singing. I found the Donkey Row hoppers immensely lovable and affectionate. We had wonderful days with them each September in the hopfields of Kent. It was social work. The mass of them we could not even touch with religion.

I grew somewhat "extreme" in this parish under the influence of my vicar, to whom at first I was too "Protestant." I remember he disliked the hat that I arrived in — a round, flat one. The vicarage dog ate the hat, and I bought a more "priestly" one.

For a year or two things went fairly smoothly and I suffered from no qualms about the Anglican religion. How far I sincerely believed that I was a "Catholic" during that period I find it difficult to estimate now. Sufficiently at any rate to argue heatedly with "low-church" and "modernist" clergy in defense of my claim.



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And sufficiently to be thoroughly annoyed with a Roman Catholic lady who, whenever we met, told me she was praying for my conversion to the "true Church," and a Franciscan Friar in the hopfields who told me the same. I felt like telling them they could pray until they were black in the face. I remember, too, that whenever I met a Roman Catholic priest I experienced a sense of inferiority and a vague feeling of not quite being the real thing, or, at least, of there being an indefinable but marked difference between us.

It was when I could no longer avoid certain unpleasant facts with which I was confronted in my work as an Anglican clergyman, that the first uneasiness came.

I was in the house one day of a certain dock laborer who lived exactly opposite our church but never darkened its doors. I chose the occasion to ask him — why not? His reply flattened me out; it was to the effect that he could see no valid reason for believing what I taught in preference to what the "low-church bloke dahn the road" taught. I could not give a satisfactory answer to his challenge. I don't suppose he believed in either of us really; but he had placed me in a quandary. We were both Anglican clergymen, and we were both flatly contradicting each other from our respective pulpits.

It set a question simmering in my mind — Why should *anybody* believe what I taught? And a further question — What authority had I for what I was teaching?

I began, for the first time with real anxiety, to examine the Anglican Church. And with that examination I found I could no longer blind myself to certain patent facts, which hitherto I had brushed aside. The Established Church was a church of contradictions, of parties, each of which had an equal claim to represent it, and all of which were destructive of its general claim to be a part of the Church of Christ — directly one affirmed its Unity.

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As far as authority was concerned, it was possible to believe anything or nothing without ecclesiastical interference. You could be an extreme "Anglo-Catholic and hold all the doctrines of the Catholic Church except the inconvenient ones like Papal Infallibility; you could be an extreme modernist and deny (while retaining Christian terms) all the doctrines of the Christian religion. No bishop said Yes or No imperatively to any party. The bishops were as divided as the parties. For practical purposes, if bishops did interfere, they were ignored, even by their own clergy. If the Holy Ghost, as claimed, was with the Church of England, then, logically, the Holy Ghost was the author of contradictions; for each party claimed His guidance. These facts presented me with a quandary which appeared insurmountable, and which remained insurmountable.

I have often been asked, since my conversion, how, in view of them, Anglican clergy can be sincere in remaining where they are. My reply has been — they *are* sincere. There is a state of mental blindness in which one is incapable of seeing the plain logic of facts. I only know that it was over a year before I acted on these facts myself. And I honestly believe I was sincere during that period. Only those who have been Protestants can appreciate the thick veil of prejudice, fear, and mistrust of "Rome" which hampers every groping toward the truth.

It was about this time that there fell into my hands a book written by a Catholic priest, who himself had once been an Anglican clergyman, who had been faced by the same difficulties, and who had found the solution of them all in the Catholic Church. "But the Catholic Church *can't* be the solution," I said. And there rose before my mind a vision of all I had been taught about her from my boyhood upwards — her false teaching, her corruptions of the doctrines of Christ. The Catholic Church, though, was the Church of the overwhelming



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majority of Christians, and always had been. If what I had been taught was true, then, for nearly two thousand years the great mass of Christians had been deluded and deceived by lies. Could Christ have allowed a hoax, an imposture of that magnitude? In His name? The Catholic Church was either an imposture or —

Or what?

I began to buy Catholic books. To study Catholic doctrines. To read history from the Catholic standpoint.

The day came when I sat looking into the fire asking myself: "Is what the world says of the Catholic Church true? Or what the Catholic Church says of herself? Have I all these years been shaking my fist at a phantom of my own imagining fed on prejudice and ignorance?"

I compared her Unity with the complete lack of it outside. Her Authority with the absence of anything approaching real authority in the Church of which I was a member and a minister. The unchangeable moral code she proclaimed with the wavering, shilly-shallying moral expediency that Protestantism allowed. She began to look so very much more like the Church that God would have made, just as the Established Church began to look so very much more like the church that man would have made.

When I was passing Westminster Cathedral one day I went in and knelt for half an hour before the Blessed Sacrament. I came out terribly shaken — spiritually shaken. It is impossible to describe; but in that short half hour what, until now, I had contemplated as a problem, had suddenly assumed an aspect of imperative-ness. A problem that had to be solved, not played with. For within those four walls there loomed up before my spiritual vision an immensity, a vast reality, before which everything else had shrunk away. The church, whose clergyman I was, seemed to have slipped from under my feet.

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I returned to the East End dazed. That night amongst the hoppers I felt like a stranger moving about.

I went about for weeks in a state of uncertainty, undecided in my conscience as to whether I was morally bound to face things out or not — wretched under the suspicion that what "Rome" said might be true — that I was no priest; that my "Mass" was no Mass at all; that I was genuflecting before — ?; that my "absolutions" were worthless. The more I prayed about it, the more unreal my ministry appeared.

I decided to consult a certain very "extreme" clergyman, whom I believed to be sincere beyond question (as he was), and a man of deep spiritual piety. I had three or four talks with him in all, the general result of which was to leave me more confused intellectually than ever, but spiritually more at peace; though it took me months before I realized that this peace was a false one, and that I had shelved the matter not from its intellectual difficulties, but for worldly reasons. For those talks had banged upon me an unpleasant vista of what might happen if I went "over to Rome" — the loss of my position, my salary, friends and all; not only the burning of all my boats, but the wounding of my mother and father cruelly. Even more, "Rome" might not accept me for her priesthood; in any case it would be starting all over again, possibly from baptism. If she did not want me for a priest, I should have to . . .

My whole being revolted against the prospect. It was impossible — such a demand. I had been carried away by emotions. It was a snare of Satan. I should be a traitor to the Church of my baptism. God had placed me here in the Church of England. He was blessing my work as its minister. He had given me endless graces.

I buried myself in that work again, and for a time succeeded in forgetting, or at least stifling, the fears that had been my torment — until the haphazard remark of a



photographer (registering my features), an agnostic I believe, opened my eyes to my inability honestly to defend the Established Church's position; it was to the effect that if Christianity were true, obviously the Roman Catholic Church, with her authority was right. It was the testimony of a man who had no ax to grind. A Jewish dentist made the same remark in effect to me shortly afterwards. The man-in-the-street testifies the same with his: "If I were religious, I'd be a Roman Catholic."

Whether it was the photographer or not, my fears were released once more from their repression, abruptly and acutely, and this time I resolved that it should be a fight to the finish, either way — that no worldly or material consideration should interfere. The clergyman whom I had consulted had already made one thing clear in my mind — that the issue between Rome and Canterbury, the crux of the whole problem, was the claim of Rome to be the Infallible teaching authority appointed by God, and the denial by Canterbury of that claim. The whole question boiled down to the question of Infallibility, and on that everything else hung.

I entered upon an intensive study of the point. I read the history of the doctrine, the Fathers and the Councils of the Church, and what they had to say; examined its rationality. At the end of some months I came to the conclusion — that, as far as Holy Scripture, history, and reason were concerned, the Catholic Church could prove her claim to be God's Infallible Teacher up to the hilt.

It is difficult after all these years to recapture the exact mode of its appeal to my reason; but it was the appeal that the doctrine of the Infallibility of the Church inevitably presents to any man who is prepared to lay aside bias, prejudice, and preconceptions. I will try to state it in the fewest words possible.

Infallibility is the only guarantee we have that the Christian religion is true. Actually, if I, at this moment,

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did not believe in an Infallible Teacher appointed by God, then nothing on earth would induce me to believe in the Christian religion. If, as outside the Catholic Church, Christian doctrines are a matter of private judgment, and therefore the Christian religion a mere matter of human opinion, then there is no obligation upon any living soul to believe in it. Why should I stake my immortal soul upon human opinion? For that is all you have if you refuse the Infallible Church.

In itself her claim may be reduced to this: the Catholic Church, when she defines a doctrine of Faith or morals, when she tells us what to believe and what to do; in a word, what the Christian religion is — then, and then only, she is prevented by God from making a mistake, from teaching the untruth. The Church is God's mouthpiece — His voice. Could God's voice speak untruth? Protestantism, claiming the Holy Ghost and presenting a jumble of contradictions, declares, in effect, that God *does* speak untruth. And only blinded reason prevents its adherents from seeing and admitting that unpalatable fact. Sanity alone should compel every thinking man to halt before the Catholic Church's very claim.

It is commonly assumed that submission to an Infallible authority in religion involves slavery, that Catholics cannot think for themselves, that their reason is stifled, that they commit intellectual suicide. "No educated man could accept the medieval dogmas of the Catholic Church." Examined in the light of horse sense and human reason, that shibboleth of the modernist leaders is revealed in all its naked stupidity, as an irrational and unscientific piece of snobbery for gulling the masses and blinding them to the claims of the Catholic Church. In intent, since the dogmas are the same today, it means: "No educated man could submit to what the Catholic Church claims to be infallibly true": or,



more simply, "No educated man could submit to Infallibility in the matter of religion." For acceptance involves submission to the one Church that claims it.

The obvious reply is: "In the name of all that is sane — why not?" When in every other department of life he is submitting to infallible truth already? Is slavery involved; is reason stifled; is it intellectual suicide — to submit to the infallible truth of the law of gravity; do men jump off cliffs on the chance of going up instead of down? To submit, as every scientist does, to the fixed data of science, believing them to be infallibly true; could he be a scientist at all, if he refused to submit? To submit, as every educated man does, by eating, to the infallible truth that the human body needs food? To submit, even if he was not there and never saw it, to the infallible truth of the Great War? To submit, as every mathematician does, to the multiplication table? To the axioms of Euclid? To submit, as every honest businessman does, to the infallible principles of business honesty? As all businessmen do to the infallible requirements for running a business at all? Were a businessman to conduct his business as the modernists conduct their religion, he would close down as the modernists have closed down Christianity for themselves and their adherents.

Examples could be multiplied to show that in every department of life every rational being is already submitting to infallible truth. Is it rational or irrational to proclaim that no educated man could submit in the hundredth case, that of religion, when he submits in the other ninety-nine?

On the face of it the rationality lies with those who submit in the hundredth and most vital case of all. Is it a sign of education to submit to human opinions in preference to the revealed truths of God, who Himself declares that they were to be taught and accepted, or else refused under pain of eternal damnation? To prefer

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the negations of modernism to dogmas of the Church that *must* teach infallibly if she teaches Christianity, i.e., the revealed truths of God? Of the Church that *must* be infallible when she teaches the truth, since truth is an infallible thing?

When, as far as reason was concerned, I was satisfied as to the unique claim of Rome, upon which all else depended, I decided to present my case for no longer remaining in the Church of England to one or two prominent scholars among its clergy. I did so. As far as I can recollect, the "refutations" given me made no impression whatever. Though easily my superiors in scholarship, I had sufficient knowledge and logic to perceive that the great chain of Scriptural and historical evidence for the Catholic claim remained unbroken by excerpts from St. Augustine, St. Cyprian, and others, conveniently interpreted according to the will of the reader and not to the mind of the author. It is little less than amazing to me now that scholars of repute should endeavor to counter the vast weight of evidence against them with what they themselves must in honesty admit is the less likely interpretation — to fit the rock to the pebble rather than the pebble to the rock.

To my case for leaving a church which was so plainly devoid, in view of its contradictions, of any divine teaching authority, I received no valid answer at all. Every conceivable *argumentum ad hominem* was presented; sentiment, "Roman fever," "intellectual suicide," treachery to the "Church of my Baptism," "corruption of Rome," the whole well-worn gamut of "objections" was paraded. I had read them all, though, already, and found them untrue. The great *facts* about the Catholic Church were left standing — unassailable.

And those facts demanded submission.

I have been asked again and again since I became a Catholic, why I left the Church of England, and often,



the implication behind the question, if not actually expressed, has been that my motive for doing so could not have been based on reason. There is a prevalent idea that converts to Rome are in some mysterious manner "got hold of," or "caught by Roman priests." I would like to assure any non-Catholic who may happen to read this that converts are not "got hold of" or "caught." In my own case I had rarely even spoken to a "Roman priest," before, of my own free will and with my reason already convinced, I went to consult one at the London Oratory. It is true that in doing so I was still full of Protestant suspicion and imagined that he would be extremely gratified to "get hold of" a real live Anglican clergyman; I should make a splendid "catch."

The priest in question received me most calmly. He showed no sign of excitement; he did not stand on his head or caper about. He did not even appear to regard me as a particularly good "catch." He answered my questions and invited me to come again, if I cared to, but no more. I left, feeling several sizes smaller.

I learned many things, however, from that interview. It was so entirely different from the interviews with Anglican scholars. For the priest there was no difficult case to bolster up. Not a single question that I put to him presented "difficulties." There were no awkward corners to get round. I believe his candidness about the human side of the Catholic Church almost startled me. Never once was he on his defense. All that I had been groping toward so painfully and laboriously was so obvious to him as to leave me wondering how it could ever have not been obvious to myself.

I realized, too, from that interview that "going over to Rome" would be very much more than stepping out of a small boat on to an Atlantic liner. It would be no less than coming into the Kingdom of God on earth — and the Catholic Church was that Kingdom of God.

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I was not coming in on my own terms, but on hers. I was not conferring a privilege upon her; she was conferring an inestimable privilege upon me. I was not going to make myself a Catholic, the Catholic Church was going to make me one. There would be a formal course of instruction, a real testing of my faith, and finally, a real submission to a living authority — the living authority of God on earth.

I hope I am wrong, but I have sometimes suspected that there are some who have never made their submission to the Catholic Church, and yet who have reached the point at which I stood, after seeing that priest; those whose reason has led them to entrance gates of the Kingdom of God, who have seen inscribed above them that word *submission* in all its naked, uncompromising meaning — and turned away. I wonder if they can ever forget that they once looked into their mother's eyes — and refused.

Reason may submit; the will may refuse.

It is a matter of dispositions and the grace of God, once conviction of the reason has been attained. Actually, it involves an *unconditional* surrender of the will to God — no easy task for a Protestant whose whole outlook in the spiritual direction has been determined by likes and dislikes, who has been accustomed to a religion that costs him little and claims the right of private judgment, who has detested being *told* what to believe and what to do; in a word, who has been habitually indisposed, mentally and spiritually, for anything approaching unconditional submission of the will. I have no intention of hurting feelings, but I am convinced that the supreme difficulty for most Anglicans who would "like to go over to Rome," but do not, is their (unconscious perhaps) inability even to contemplate submission to the one Church that demands it. When the late Archbishop of Canterbury publicly proclaimed that he and



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the adherents of the Established Church would *never* pass under a doorway upon whose lintel was inscribed the word *submission*, he was precisely expressing the Protestant mind. Mercifully he was unaware that submission to the Catholic Church is submission to God.

I claim no credit, in my own case, for submitting; but rather blame for delaying so long — for the moral cowardice that hesitates to lay the onus of the consequences upon Almighty God, to burn one's boats and take the plunge.

When, by Divine Grace, I was ready, and had made my decision, there was only one thing to do. I told my vicar, packed my bags, and left the East End. At the London Oratory I placed myself under instruction and, later on, was received.

I would like to mention that my Protestant vicar and a curate who succeeded me in the parish are now also, both of them — priests of the Catholic Church.

"Well — and what have you found?"

I will tell you — and what I was told I should find.

I was told that the Catholic Church always placed the Church before Christ — that Christ was kept in the background. I have found, on the contrary, that she places me in a personal relationship with Christ that can never be attained outside — that Christ is her very being, by whom and for whom she exists, and to whom to unite her children is her one ceaseless care.

I was told that if I became a Catholic my mind would be fettered, my reason stifled; I should no longer be able to think for myself. I have found on the contrary that the Catholic Church placed me on a platform of truth from which even a poor mind like mine can rise to fathomless heights. I have found the truth that sets men free.

I was told that in the Catholic Church it was all decay and stagnation. I have found, however, the very life of

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God Himself pulsing through every vein of His Mystical Body. It was like coming out of a small stuffy room with all the windows closed, and striding up to the top of some great hill with all the winds of heaven roaring round. I have found Life.

Instead of the hard spiritual tyranny of which I was told, I have found a loving Mother who supplies my every human need. Instead of corruption, sanctity unknown outside.

And sinners, too. For the Church of Christ does not break the bruised reed, nor quench the smoking flax. Like her Master she ever seeks and saves that which is lost. She is big enough and loving enough to hold even sinners in the fold; if she did not, she would not be the Church of Christ.

Instead of hatred, I have found compassion for those outside — for the sheep without a shepherd. And I would that I could show them right into the heart of him whom men call the Pope of Rome — the shepherd of the sheep, the Vicar of Christ on earth; for then I would show them no ambitious autocrat striving for worldly power, but a loving father loved by his children as no other man on earth is loved.

And I have found the Kingdom of Heaven on earth. The City of God.

That City that "hath no need of the sun, nor of the moon to shine in it; for the glory of God hath enlightened it, and the Lamb is the lamp thereof."



## UNADULTERATED CATHOLICISM

SHEILA KAYE-SMITH

IN WRITING about my conversion I must avoid the pitfall of being wise eight years after the event, for I am aware of a temptation to credit myself with thoughts and feelings which really came later. I am a Catholic now for many reasons which, though they may have been dormant, did not actively influence me at the time I first became one. I should like to think that I joined the Church because I saw the choice offered me between two civilizations — the civilization of Catholic Christianity, with its entirely spiritual values, and the material civilization of the world-State which may at some future date rise out of the fused ideals of Moscow and Hollywood. But I cannot delude myself that I realized this alternative till I had read Mr. Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World*. Then I saw where I stood and was thankful; but I cannot claim the vision for my own.

I am, of course, in a different position from many converts in that for some years before my reception into the Church I believed and practised much of its teachings. I called and thought myself a Catholic for twelve years before I actually became one. I did not have to face the difficulties that commonly beset converts from a definite Protestant form of religion or from no religion at all. I believed in the Transubstantiation, in Purgatory, in the Sacrifice of the Mass; I prayed for the dead, I invoked the saints, I went to confession. Though I now see that I did not quite believe and do those things as

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I believe and do them now, I was very differently situated from those who have to learn about them for the first time. In many ways my position was easier, but in others it was more difficult, in that the issues for me were not straightforward, but confusing and uncertain.

I should think many non-Catholic readers will exclaim: "If I could believe in Transubstantiation and all the rest, I shouldn't waste twelve years in the Church of England. I should go the whole way." I hope they would. I wish I had. Twelve years ago I looked at Catholicism and turned away from it because it repelled me, whereas the religion of the Anglican High Church did not but attract me with its color and warmth and sense of personal romance. Catholicism still repelled me, even when the other had lost its attraction, and continued to repel me in a decreasing measure until I was actually inside the Church.

But I cannot regard those twelve years of Anglo-Catholicism as wasted, though I am sorry I made the choice I did. As an Anglo-Catholic I learned much of the faith and practice of the universal Church. I was "under instruction," as it were, though for about two dozen times as long as most catechumens.

I preached as well as practised my religion: I wrote and spoke, attended congresses, visited the principal High Churches. But I often felt doubts of my position. These were sometimes explicit. I once consulted my Anglican confessor, and he set them at rest, because — I realize now and half suspected then — that was what I really wanted. More often my doubts were implicit: I can see now, looking back on those days, that some of my most decided gestures on behalf of Anglo-Catholicism were due to a secret uneasiness, the need to justify myself.

For instance, a few years after I joined the High Church movement (not in the first flush of my enthusiasm, when I wrote such novels as *Tamarisk Town* and



Joanna Godden, but later, when my zeal was losing some of its warmth), I wrote a novel dealing with Anglo-Catholicism in a country village — *The End of the House of Alard*. This was, I realized even at that time, an attempt at self-explanation — to myself as well as to others. I also colored the picture attractively for my own sake — I painted Anglo-Catholicism as I hoped and dreamed, but only half believed it to be. I had never known a parish like Vinehall or a parson like Father Luce. I created them as a part of a wish fulfillment, and idealized that which I could not quite face as I saw it.

I should never want to write such a book about Catholicism, and those Catholics who have sometimes said they would like a Catholic novel from me will, I fear (or rather hope), be disappointed — that is to say if they mean a novel of the same type as *Alard*. I no longer feel the need to justify myself — to myself or to anyone else. I have been given a faith which is objective, and I am delivered from that uneasiness which accompanies most subjective ventures, and which urges the venturer to give them substance and objectivity by whatever means he may have in his power.

But in spite of these occult uncertainties it is quite possible that I should never have become a Catholic if it had not been for my marriage. This may seem strange to those Catholics who, I know, almost gave up praying for my conversion when they heard I had married a Church of England parson. But the fact remains that my marriage did more than anything else to shake me out of my place in the High Church movement. It worked in three ways. In the first place it broke up certain friendships which might have kept me where I was. In the second it brought me into close association with a mind which had never fallen to the glamor of Anglo-Catholicism in the same sense as I had. My husband, though believing all that the High Church party stood for, was

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inclined to be critical of some of its actions and personalities. He had not the same enthusiasm for it as a cause, and his Quaker ancestry had made him less sensational and more evangelical in his methods. I came to see a good many threadbare patches through his eyes.

The third effect of my marriage was perhaps the most far reaching. It showed me the Church of England from within. I was now, so to speak, thrust into its inner circles, to watch its methods, hear its rumors, and realize some of its inhibitions. I could no longer, as I had done hitherto, take refuge in one "extreme" corner and ignore the rest. The ostrich had to take her head out of the sand, to find — as one might have expected — a desert.

Though brought up in the Established Church, I had never really taken kindly to it or believed in its official position, and I should probably have had nothing to do with it after I was grown up but for my conviction that Anglo-Catholicism would soon transform it — had in fact already done so. As a parson's wife I saw how far this was from being the case. In certain ways the High Church party had undoubtedly tidied up the Church of England, but on a closer view it all seemed superficial and external, with no real change of heart. Moreover, for one parson who came to believe in the Immaculate Conception there would be two who came to disbelieve in the Virgin Birth: Modernism was having just such a powerful sweep as Anglo-Catholicism, and a far less critical reception.

As a parson's wife I saw how limited and unrepresentative was the appeal of official Anglicanism, and I also became convinced that Anglo-Catholicism was just as incapable of appealing to the nation as a whole. I could not help realizing that it attracted only certain types of mind. Here I must be careful, and not attribute to myself more than I realized at that time. Now I see Anglo-Catholicism as a religion of the oversublimated,



of nature that can feel, temporally, at least, at home in the subjective. Hence its appeal to women, and the rather hectic atmosphere of some of its religious externals. "Churchgoing without Church" was a phrase which came into my mind, and made me wonder: were all these women demanding all these services of their overworked clergy — one clergyman I knew had to celebrate twice daily during holiday time for a mere handful — because their churchgoing was a substitute for a missed reality? The psychologist as well as the Catholic priest would answer, "Yes," though they might differ in their interpretations of reality.

Then another chance phrase came along. I was discussing with a friend the Woman crowned with the stars in the Apocalypse and seeing the figure as our Lady rather than as the Church. My friend — a non-Catholic — replied: "But our Lady *is* the Church."

It will be difficult for Catholics to realize that these words gave me an entirely new conception. Till then I had never thought of the Church as a living thing. I had regarded it as a vast organization, and I had accepted the "branch theory" as commonly taught by Anglo-Catholics, according to which there are three branches of the one society — the Anglican, the Eastern, and the Roman. But once one conceives the Church as a living personality, it is impossible to see it divided and yet remaining alive. "The hand cannot say to the foot: 'I have no need of thee.'" My branch theory would not work once I saw the Church no longer as a mere organization but as the living body of Christ.

The reflections brought me to the conviction that I was in schism, and there seemed only one thing to do — to return to the unity from which I was cut off. I found a certain number of Anglo-Catholics shared my conviction, but it did not affect them in the same way. The only question for them was the validity of their orders,

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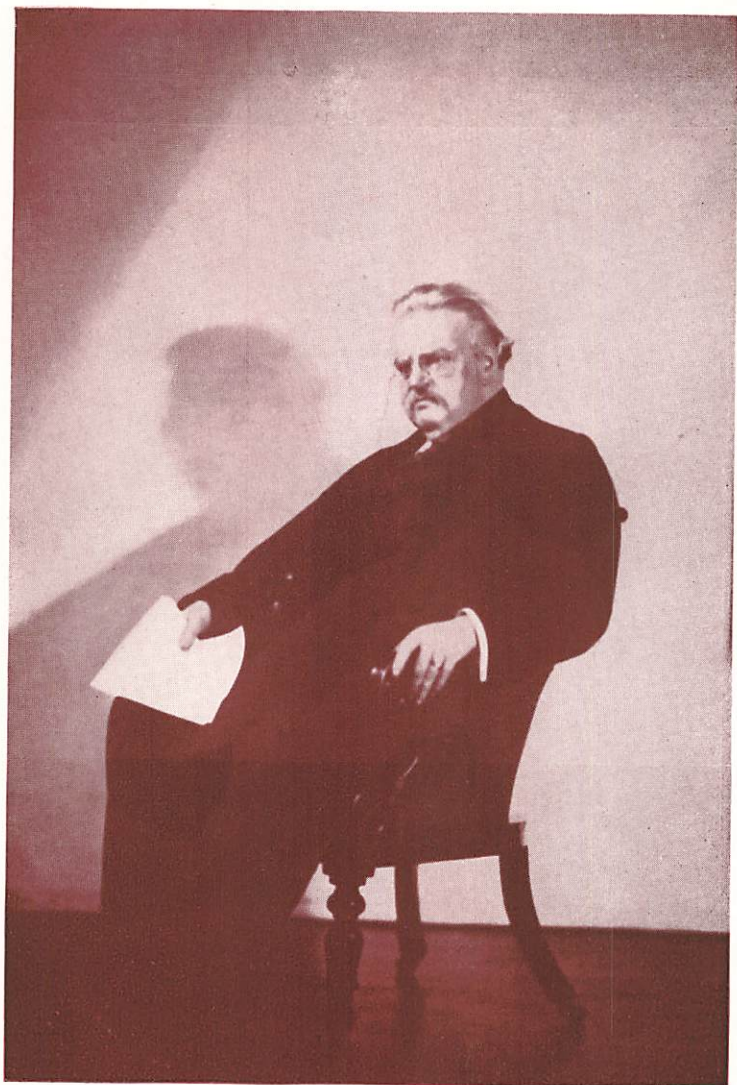
and they were convinced that the Catholic Church was wrong on that point, while accepting her teaching on every other, even on the Infallibility of the Pope. I was told that I was a member of the One True Church, no matter what the One True Church said to the contrary, that I had a right to all she offered, from indulgences down to the dispensation of her prelates as to fasting and abstinence. So why should I change? If I waited, reunion would come. Rome would become less intransigent, and welcome back into her fold those sheep who had hitherto managed to enjoy its privileges while remaining outside. I could not believe it.

Finding myself in every point of belief a Roman Catholic, and intellectually convinced of schism, there was only one thing for me to do. For many reasons I now wanted to do it, but for many others I did not. Twelve years ago I had been repelled by the austerity of the Catholic Church, and though after twelve years of Anglo-Catholicism, I no longer felt the same aversion, I still expected to find dryness, coldness, a certain unscrupulousness and unspirituality. Of course, I did not find them, but the fact that I expected to find them caused my heart to lag some weeks behind my mind.

For a long time I was unable to feel much happiness in what I was doing. But I remembered the story of Coventry Patmore, who almost up to the last was unable to bring himself to accept emotionally the Catholicism which his mind had long received. I knew that there were psychological reasons for this difficulty, due to the mind's undertow, the pull of hidden currents under the turning tide. It was only a question of waiting for the heart's release, for the day which came surely, when I could say: *Laetatus sum in his quae dicta sunt mihi: in Domum Domini ibimus* (Ps. 121:1).

I was glad when it was said unto me:  
"We will go up to the house of the Lord."





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*Howard Foster*

## KICKING AGAINST THE GOAD

GILBERT KEITH CHESTERTON

UNTIL about the end of the nineteenth century, a man was expected to give his reasons for joining the Catholic Church. Today a man is really expected to give his reasons for not joining it. This may seem an exaggeration: but I believe it to stand for a subconscious truth in thousands of minds. As for the fundamental reasons for a man doing it, there are only two that are really fundamental. One is that he believes it to be the solid objective truth, which is true whether he likes it or not; and the other that he seeks liberation from his sins. If there be any man for whom these are not the main motives, it is idle to inquire what were his philosophical or historical or emotional reasons for joining the old religion; for he has not joined it at all.

But a preliminary word or two may well be said about the other matter; which may be called the challenge of the Church. I mean that the world has recently become aware of that challenge in a curious and almost creepy fashion. I am literally one of the least, because one of the latest, of a crowd of converts who have been thinking along the same lines as I. There has been a happy increase in the number of Catholics; but there has also been, if I may so express it, a happy increase in the number of non-Catholics; in the sense of conscious non-Catholics. The world has become conscious that it is not Catholic. Only lately it would have been about as likely to brood on the fact that it was not Confucian. And all the array of



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reasons for not joining the Church of Rome marked but the beginning of the ultimate reason for joining it.

At this stage, let it be understood, I am speaking of a reaction and rejection which was, as mine would once have been, honestly if conventionally convinced. I am not speaking now of the stage of mere self-deception or sulky excuses; though such a stage there may be before the end. I am remarking that even while we truly think that the reasons are reasonable, we tacitly assume that the reasons are required. Far back at the beginning of all our changes, if I may speak for many much better than myself, there was the idea that we must have reasons for not joining the Catholic Church. I never had any reasons for not joining the Greek Church, or the religion of Mahomet, or the Theosophical Society, or the Society of Friends.

Doubtless I could have discovered and defined the reasons, had they been demanded; just as I could have found the reasons for not going to live in Lithuania, or not being chartered accountant, or not changing my name to Vortigern Brown, or not doing a thousand other things that it had never occurred to me to do. But the point is that I never felt the presence or pressure of the possibility at all; I heard no distant and distracting voice calling me to Lithuania or Islam; I had no itch to explain to myself why my name was not Vortigern or why my religion was not Theosophy. That sort of presence and pressure of the Church I believe to be universal and ubiquitous today; not only among Anglicans, but among Agnostics. I repeat that they do not mean that they have no real objections; on the contrary, I mean that they have begun really to object; they have begun to kick and struggle.

One of the most famous modern masters of fiction and social philosophy, perhaps the most famous of all, was once listening to a discussion between a High Church

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curate and myself about the theory of Christianity. About half way through it, the great novelist began to dance wildly about the room with characteristic and hilarious energy calling out, "I'm not a Christian! I'm not a Christian!" flapping about like one escaped as from the net of the fowler. He had the sense of a huge vague army making an encircling movement, and heading him and herding him in the direction of Christianity and ultimate Catholicism. He felt he had cut his way out of the encirclement, and was not caught yet. With all respect for his genius and sincerity, he had the air of one delightedly doing a bolt, before anybody could say to him, "Why do we not join the Catholic Church?"

Now, I have noted first this common consciousness of the challenge of the Church, because I believe it to be connected with something else. That something else is the strongest of all the purely intellectual forces that dragged me toward the truth. It is not merely the survival of the faith, but the singular nature of its survival. I have called it by conventional phrase the old religion. But it is not an old religion; it is a religion that refuses to grow old. At this moment of history it is a very young religion; rather especially a religion of young men. It is much newer than the new religion; its young men are more fiery, more full of their subject, more eager to explain and argue than were the young Socialists of my own youth. It does not merely stand firm like an old guard; it has recaptured the initiative and is conducting the counterattack. In short, it is what youth always is rightly or wrongly; it is aggressive.

It is this atmosphere of the aggressiveness of Catholicism that has thrown the old intellectuals on the defensive. It is this that has produced the almost morbid self-consciousness of which I have spoken. The converts are truly fighting, in those words which recur like a burden at the opening of the Mass, for a thing which giveth joy to their



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youth. I cannot understand how this unearthly freshness in something so old can possibly be explained, except on the supposition that it is indeed unearthly.

## AN ANGLO-CATHOLIC'S DILEMMA

A. R. BURGESS-BAYLY

I ALWAYS say that there are two incidents in my life, which though unknown to me at the time, had the after-effect of making me a Catholic.

The first was when I was a boy at Westminster School, at the age of sixteen, shortly after my Confirmation. Along with several other boys I had been instructed in a class in preparation for that rite. The teaching given was of the vaguest description, as was also the teaching given in preparation for our First Communion; so that when the Confirmation took place, shortly afterwards to be followed by our First Communion at midday on the following Sunday, I had only the haziest notion of what was really taking place.

Religion at that period of my life possessed but little or no attraction to me. I was frankly bored when Sunday came round. During term time, I would make my Communion at midday at certain stated intervals, more as a matter of duty than anything else. And then the first incident happened which had the effect of altering the whole of my religious outlook.

On going home for the holidays on one occasion, my mother who was a pious "High Anglican" asked me when I made my Communion last, and when I answered that it was at midday on such and such a Sunday, her reply was as follows: "You should never," she said, "make your Communion late. Always go the first thing in the morning, before you have had your breakfast."



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Quite a simple remark in itself, but it started making me think. Why should I go before breakfast? I had not been told that at school. From that day onward, I can date my first initiation into "Anglo-Catholic" principles.

About this time, when I was at home in Brighton for the holidays, I used to hear reports about a certain Vicar of a church situated at the other end of the town — "The Little Church on the Hill," as it was affectionately called, The Church of the Annunciation. The Vicar was certainly a very remarkable man. He had the reputation of being a saint. And even after all these years, I am able to look back and say that I have never quite found his equal.

I met him only once, and that was on the Sunday before his death when he was in the last throes of consumption. But the little conversation I had with him has left a lasting impression upon my mind which no amount of time will ever efface, for it was to his teaching and above all his example that I am indebted for my first grasp of Catholic principles. For it was there that I learned to make my first Confession, and it was in that church that I realized — not in its fullness, but at any rate in part, what the Catholic Faith meant — what it expects of you. May he rest in peace! He had his three wishes granted him, viz.: to die on a Friday; between the hours of twelve and three, like his Divine Master before him; and amongst his own people.

In course of time I was ordained deacon by another remarkable man in his way, Bishop King of Lincoln. He, too, was a saintly man, loved by all, rich and poor alike. When I was a student at Lincoln, I was in the habit of going to Confession to him. He had his own prejudices. He had a great devotion to our Lord's presence in the Blessed Sacrament. He would inculcate the practice of Confession and opportunities were given to the candidates on the eve of their ordination to make their Confession. But he had a wholesome dread of anything that he would

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term distinctively "Roman." I well remember, on the eve of my ordination to the "priesthood" how he called me aside and lectured me very strongly on the practice of the invocation of the saints, a lecture which was occasioned by the fact that my Rector had, in the church where I was curate during the first year of my diaconate, erected a picture of the Blessed Virgin Mary with a couple of candles on each side of it, and the matter had been reported to him by the Archdeacon.

My next sphere of work was in a county town in Cornwall, where I had as my Vicar, the late Bishop of ——. I fear I was rather a thorn in his side. The services at the parish church were ritualistic, but at the Mission Church of St. Leonard's we were in all things the most "Roman." Although I was nothing in the way of a preacher, I was an indefatigable visitor — believing in the old adage that "A house-going parson makes a churchgoing people." It was certainly so at St. Leonard's, and in spite of my "Roman" ways, I received a letter from the Bishop of the Diocese complimenting me on my pastoral activities.

But what was to be a matter of far greater satisfaction than even a Bishop's letter was the saying of old Mrs. ———, a regular member of the congregation. "Lor', he do antic, but there we love him so much that we all antic with him!"

My next curacy, after a brief spell of work in a mining village in Yorkshire, was at a well-known "Anglo-Catholic" Church in a fashionable health resort. Here at St. John's was "Anglo-Catholicism" at its best. "Daily Mass," "Sung Mass" on Sundays, Confessions with regular hours for hearing them, constituted the normal state of things in the spiritual life of the parish. The Vicar was much sought after as a Confessor. The only fly in the ointment, so far as I myself was concerned, lay in the fact that it was not nearly "Catholic" enough.

I remember on one occasion preaching a sermon on



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devotion to our Lady and advocating the practice of invoking the saints. It gave a great offense to some of the lady members of the congregation and I was consequently reprimanded by the Vicar, who told me quite kindly that although he agreed with the practice of invoking the saints and regularly practised it himself in his private devotions it was not a subject to be taught from the pulpit. One wonders what he would now feel (he has been dead some years, God rest his soul!) for it is now quite a common sight in practically every "Anglo-Catholic" church to see a statue of the Blessed Virgin, St. John's included, and the "Hail Mary" is recited publicly as a matter of course.

It was about this period in my life that I became acquainted with a certain religious community of nuns in the Church of England, who styled themselves "Benedictines." They had come into possession of an old abbey — a Benedictine foundation — at West Malling in Kent. Every year on the Feast of Corpus Christi it was the custom for certain of the "Anglo-Catholic" clergy from various parts of the country to take part in the celebrations that marked the occasion.

One year I was invited to act as subdeacon at the "Mass." There was nothing savoring of Anglicanism at Malling. It was pure, unadulterated "Romanism" from beginning to end. The day began with a series of "Masses" said in the Gate House Chapel, followed by "Solemn High Mass" in Latin in the Abbey itself. This was followed by "Exposition" on the "High Altar" until the afternoon when Vespers was sung and a procession with the "Host" took place in the Abbey grounds, crowds of people taking part, children scattering flowers before the canopy, and followed by the nuns and the Lady Abbess carrying her pastoral staff.

In 1913, the whole of the Community was received into the Catholic Church.

I now come to the last period of my sojourn in the Church of England. During the last two years I spent in her ministry, I was given the sole charge of a Mission Church in one of the London suburbs, under the title of the "Church of the Holy Cross." A fit title, it would appear, for what was about to follow! For it was here that my troubles were to begin in real earnest.

I had always believed that I was a priest. For thirteen years of my ministry in the Church of England, I believed without a shadow of doubt that I had the power of offering the Holy Sacrifice, the power of forgiving sins, besides other powers which every Catholic priest possesses.

And then one day, I was consulted by a member of my flock about a certain difficulty which he had. It was concerning one of the 39 Articles of Religion which every clergyman on undertaking duty in a fresh place has to express his assent to from the pulpit of the parish church on the first Sunday after his induction to the curacy.

It runs as follows:

"I, ———, do solemnly make the following Declaration. I assent to the Thirty-Nine Articles of Religion, and to the Book of Common Prayer, and of the Ordering of Bishops, Priests and Deacons. I believe the Doctrine of the Church of England as therein set forth, to be agreeable to the Word of God; and in Public Prayer and Administration of the Sacraments I will use the form in the said Book prescribed, and none other, except so far as shall be ordered by lawful Authority."

The difficulty in my questioner's mind had to do with the thirty-first of these articles, which runs thus. It has to do with the Mass.

"The Sacrifices of Masses in which it was commonly said that the Priest did offer Christ for the quick and the dead; to have remission of pain or guilt, were blasphemous fables and dangerous deceits."

Now, I knew quite well that the interpretation put



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upon these words by "Anglo-Catholic" writers is something to this effect, viz.: that the Article in question does not *condemn* the doctrine of the Sacrifice of the Mass as it is commonly understood, but it only condemns an abuse of that doctrine which was current at the time when these Articles were drawn up.

How plausible it sounded, but was it true? It didn't satisfy my questioner. Did it really satisfy me? Well, it made me think. What were the views of the writers of the Articles themselves? Did they believe in the Mass at all? I turned to their writings. They spoke of the Mass in the most blasphemous of terms. Nay, their own actions confirmed their words. Why were the altars cast down and tables substituted in their place? Why were the very altar stones themselves turned into sinks and troughs or laid in the porches of the churches, so that men might, on entering them, tread them underfoot?

After all "it is the Mass that matters." The Church of England may be orthodox so far as her formularies are concerned with such doctrines as Baptismal Regeneration and Confession. She may even believe in a real presence in Holy Communion. But "it is the Mass that matters." Does she believe in the Mass?

And then it was that I turned to the Service for the Ordination of a priest in the Book of Common Prayer. This at any rate would show what the mind of the Church of England really was. I made a study of it. I compared it with the *Pontificale* from which it had its origin. In some things it was similar, but alas! there was this one great difference. All trace of anything relating to sacrifice had been obliterated. The whole thing was so obvious. The Church of England had no use for the Mass.

Even the "Judicious Hooker" in his work *Ecclesiastical Polity*, which we were required to study for the priest's examination by such a Catholic-minded prelate as Bishop King of Lincoln, expresses it quite clearly:

"Sacrifice," he says, "is no part of the Church's ministry, for the Gospel hath properly no sacrifice." Yet the word *priest*, he goes on to say, may be retained without harm, for when men hear it, it "draweth no more their minds to any cogitation of sacrifice than the name of a senator or of an alderman causeth them to think on old age."

Could anything be clearer and is it not all in accordance with the mind of Archbishop Cranmer who wrote as follows in his work *The Lord's Supper*, Bk. V? "As for the saying or singing of Mass by the priest, as it was in times past used, it is neither a sacrifice propitiatory nor yet a sacrifice of laud or thanksgiving, nor in any wise allowed before God, but abominable and detestable."

As Pope Leo XIII expressed it when he declared against the validity of Anglican Orders in 1896, the Anglican Ordinal is defective alike in its "form" and in its "intention."

Consequently, if there is no Sacrifice, there can be no Priest. And from that day onward, I knew in my innermost heart that I was no real priest.

And so the great change came. It was on September 14th that we were keeping the Feast of the Title (The Exaltation of the Holy Cross). Just two Sundays remained before I severed connection with the Church of England, so far as any active work was concerned. But those two Sundays were a veritable nightmare. No one but myself knew what was passing through my mind, for as one put on the priestly vestments and ascended the altar steps to offer up what one had always believed to be the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, again and again, the thought would keep recurring, "You are no *real* priest."

Shortly afterwards I was received into the Catholic Church. A period of temporary estrangement took place between me and my relations. I was told that my being "received" into the "Roman Church" was only a passing



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phase, that a few months would see me back again in the Church of England. Others regarded me as a traitor for having, as they expressed it, deserted "The Church of your Baptism." Friends whom I had not seen or heard for many a long year suddenly became interested on my behalf. "I hope," wrote one, "you will speedily return to our fold. Surely the Church of England is wide enough for us all. Many join the Roman Church for a time and then are glad to return. I feel strongly that you have made a mistake but it can be so easily rectified as is so frequently done."

Another friend, an Anglican Sister, wrote to me as follows, speaking of the Rector of the parish in which she lived, the said Rector being a man of the most "advanced" type of "Anglo-Catholicism," and whose ritual and teaching was "Roman" in the extreme:

"Father G—— sent a message. You know how blunt and determined he is. 'Tell him that I hope he will soon repent of the error of his ways. I say this in all charity.' I have never in my life come across anyone so dead against 'Papists' as he calls all Roman Catholics."

Very different was the letter I received from a priest who had apostatized from the Catholic Church, but who at the end of his life, eight years afterwards, was reconciled and died a most edifying death. "I feel sure, dear friend," he wrote, "you have obeyed your conscience. . . . It is not for me to judge, and I do know and believe you have not considered the consequences here of doing what you thought would bring you peace with God. You can have no idea how kindly B —— (my Vicar) and his wife spoke of you. Not a shadow of resentment, no controversy, only real kindness toward a friend who rightly or wrongly had done what he thought right."

The Bishop of the diocese wrote very kindly on the matter to my Vicar.

"This is indeed a blow in itself, and for what else it

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may imply; for the going of a man who has done good work and got influence may well imply more. Taken together with another secession to which you refer of a man who worked not far from you, it is very damaging to our position."

And so I bring this short story to a conclusion. Two years afterwards to the very day, our youngest child was received into the Catholic Church, to be followed four months later by her mother and the two other children.

After all, the Bishop was not very far wrong in what he wrote, for since these events took place, forty or more members of that congregation have since become Catholics. *Laus Deo Semper.*

And now, after twenty-three years have passed, I am able to look back and thank Almighty God from the bottom of my heart for having bestowed upon me the greatest of all blessings, that of being a member, although an all unworthy one, of the True Church of Jesus Christ.



## IN SEARCH OF COMMUNION

SHANE LESLIE

IT IS very hard to give one reason for becoming a Catholic when it is easier to mention a thousand small ones. People become Catholics for so many reasons. I have known men to give quite opposite reasons: one did so as the result of reading the infidel Gibbon and another through reading the Protestant version of the Bible, another through love of Gothic architecture, and another through love of Gregorian music.

I was brought up a Protestant in Northern Ireland with every privilege and pleasure that a boy could wish. The Catholic religion I heard of as something rather wicked and quite exploded. The first time I was driven past the local Catholic Seminary the driver pointed it out as a place where blind priests made poor boys as blind as themselves. He meant theologically blind but I thought they blinded them with hot irons like Hubert and Arthur in Shakespeare and was frightened out of my skin. The only other thing I heard about Catholics in my youth was that they were a queer sect who to make beautiful churches never hesitated to make themselves bankrupt!

In Protestant Ireland there was a gulf between Catholic and Protestant. My great-grandfather had fought Elections against O'Connell, but he had a good side since he refused all bribes to vote for the Union with England.

When I became a Catholic in 1908, I received an unexpected letter from a cousin, the late Lady Sykes, who wrote to me: "Your great-grandfather was the only rich

landlord in the North of Ireland who refused a Union peerage and voted against that infamous bill. Well there's been a blessing on it: all his grandchildren and great-grandchildren by his first marriage are Catholics and by his second marriage he has already seven Catholic descendants."

My great-grandmother built Protestant churches and schools but she also built a number of Catholic schools on her Donegal estates a hundred years ago. An old priest told me that he believed that as a result her descendants had become Catholics, thanks to the prayers of the Catholics who had saved their Faith in these schools at a time when Irish schools were used to pervert the impoverished Catholics from their religion. I mention this because it has a mystic bearing on my own conversion and I like to think that it came about through good deeds of others in the past as well as to the close reading and study I gave to the Catholic problem when I went to Cambridge University.

The great Cardinals Manning and Newman had died by then, but I heard their names for the first time and began to read Newman. There were passages which lifted me off my feet but though I gathered many Catholic flowers from his pages, I was content to remain till I was 21 in the Church of England which offered services and music and a beauty based on Catholic practice. It is difficult to describe what a hold the English Church had on lovers of history and ritual. The old Catholic buildings were in Anglican hands and though the Services could be depressingly Low, it was often possible to restore the old form of worship. How exciting it was to us Ritualists to see the lights relit on the old altar or the incense burnt in some old church where it had not been dreamed of for nearly four hundred years.

Ever since Cardinal Newman had tried to walk the *via media* thousands of Anglicans had followed in his path.



## *In Search Of Communion*

Not all had followed him to his logical conclusions and submitted to the Pope but the most general method of becoming a Catholic in my time was to take a course of reading Newman. His name was still magic and even the sadness of his published life has never dulled the confidence and hope with which his writings are still read. I found myself charmed and fascinated and began to make further inquiries. We used to enjoy the full Catholic ritual with Mass and Confession in our Anglican churches. Unfortunately there was a snag and that was that which Pope Leo XIII had declared, with personal reluctance, as the result of a deep searching commission, that Anglican orders were not valid. Therefore the absolution we received was not a sacramental grace and, deeply reverent though we felt, we could not be certain that the Eucharist was consecrated except by a formula of good and comfortable words. Here was the problem in a nutshell and it gave great distress to many. I was fortunate to meet two Anglican clergymen at Cambridge who had solved the question by becoming Catholic priests: the late Monsignor Robert Hugh Benson, who was actually the son of an Archbishop of Canterbury, and Monsignor Arthur Barnes, the great archeologist of the Early Church.

Monsignor Benson was then preaching in Cambridge with all his emotional powers, but it was Monsignor Barnes who could answer inquiries which went to the root of the matter. Benson made me long to become a Catholic, but I was unwilling to take the step until I had lost all historical faith in Anglican orders. Monsignor Barnes had made a deep study of the subject and while investigating the original documents came to the conclusion that the records had been tampered with and that Bishop Barlow, through whom the Apostolic Succession was claimed by the Church of Canterbury, had not been a real Catholic bishop at all!

There was another interesting point. What were our relations with the great Greek Orthodox Church, whose orders Rome herself acknowledged as true? Our theory was the branch theory that the Christian Catholic Church had been divided by the course of events into three main branches: Rome, Canterbury, and Constantinople. The Orthodox Church gave us far more encouragement than the Church of Rome. Greek prelates constantly appeared in Anglican churches and were received with full honors. We insisted that this entailed intercommunion. Had we been in real communion with the Greek, our position would have been very much stronger. As soon as my Cambridge course was over, I determined to make the test and set out on a journey to Russia. I felt confused with the controversy and I decided that if the Greek authorities allowed me to receive Holy Communion as an Anglican according to the Greek rite I would remain where I was, but, if they refused me, I would seek entry into the Church of the Popes.

In 1907 I made the trip to Moscow and Petersburg. I believe a great many enthusiasts have made the journey since in search of Communism but I am one of the very few who went there in search of Communion. The result was that though the Greek clergy were very kind and sympathetic, they could not give me full Communion. They looked on the Church of England as a part of the Latin Church which had broken away. We were expected to make our peace with Rome, not with Moscow or the Holy Synod, if Christendom was ever to be reunited.

When I returned to England I studied and accepted the full Catholic creed. I felt that I had read and studied as much as I could be expected to do and I turned to the mystical side of the Church. Visits to great Carthusian monasteries assured me of a life supernatural in our midst. Problems which still troubled me I was willing to leave simply to the thousands of better brains who for



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centuries had combined to discover the best results in theology and philosophy. It was logical that by individual efforts I could not presume to think that I could ever be right in contradiction to them. This consensus of the Church is what finally brought me into the Catholic religion. This was at Easter, 1908.

## JOY COMETH IN THE MORNING

MAC FARLANE-BARROW

YOU ask me for a brief account of the reasons which led up to my conversion to the Catholic Faith. I am highly honored that you should wish to place my experience on permanent record. At the same time, I should shrink from doing so were it not that a conversion is not a private matter, neither is it right to try to make it so. It is an instance of the generosity of Almighty God, and, for that reason, if for no other, deserves to be published to the end that His alone may be the glory, and the furtherance of His Kingdom on earth the sole object of the publication.

To give you, as it were, a frame in which to set the details of my conversion, I may say that I was brought up under the influence of the Oxford Movement. Readers of this account may not know that the above is the recognized name, in this country, for that striving after Catholic truth which was the greatest feature of the Anglican "church" during the nineteenth century, and which has been the means of bringing into the Catholic Church so many of the Anglican clergy and laity, of whom Cardinal Newman is the outstanding example. When I took orders, as the Anglican expression is, it was in that branch of the Anglican community known as The Episcopal Church in Scotland, a body which is autonomous, i.e., although in communion with the Church of England, the Archbishop of Canterbury has no jurisdiction in Scotland.



## *Joy Cometh In The Morning*

For nearly eighteen years I ministered to country congregations in the Highlands of Scotland. My teaching was of the "High Church" order, e.g., the absolute importance of apostolical succession with the threefold orders, Bishop, Priest, and Deacon, believing that the Anglicans had maintained a true succession. I taught that in our Holy Communion service there was a sacrifice, and that I, with every Anglican priest, was a sacrificing priest. I firmly believed in, and taught, the Real Presence of our Lord in our Sacrament of Holy Communion, which I did not scruple to call the Mass. With scant success, I admit, I taught people to come to Confession. To Catholics it is generally news that the Anglican church has any doctrine of Confession and Absolution by a priest. For the information of my readers, I would like to make this point clear, as it will help them to see how easy it is for a convert "High" Church man to accept the Catholic doctrine, upon being received into the Church. Hear then the Book of Common Prayer (the Anglican's one and only official guide to Doctrine). In the service for the Visitation of the Sick the following rubric occurs:

"Here shall the sick person be moved to make a special confession of his sins, if he feel his conscience troubled with any weighty matter. After which confession, the Priest shall absolve him (if he humbly and heartily desire it) after this sort:

"Our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath left power to his Church to absolve all sinners who truly repent and believe in him, of his great mercy forgive thee thine offences: And by his authority committed to me, I absolve thee from all thy sins, in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen."

Over and above this instance from the Visitation of the Sick, a definite commission to absolve from or retain sins is given by the Bishop at the Ordaining of Priests.

Now you will pardon me for dwelling on this, because, although (as I have said) it makes it easy for a "High" Church man to accept the doctrine of Penance, on his being received into the Church, it also acts as a hindrance to others. That crying need for all mankind, viz., confession of sin, with forgiveness, authoritative and all-embracing, is met, and apparently, comforted, in the Anglican church, and the devout Anglican says, "I have found Him whom my soul loveth, what more can Rome offer me?"

But, undoubtedly, above all, the one great devotion of the earnest High Church Anglican, is to the Mass, even though he may never call it by this name. Throughout my career, as a minister, I can see that this devotion was always increasing in intensity in myself, and it was along this line that I was led by the grace of God to see where the Truth really lay.

During the last twelve months or so of my ministry, I had (along with many others, no doubt) been suffering the utmost pain and misery at the public declarations of an English Bishop, Barnes, of Birmingham. I asked myself again and again, "Is it possible to remain in communion with one who is allowed to continue in his office whilst making these blasphemous utterances?" Of course, even Bishop Barnes and his fulminations is no new thing in the Anglican establishment; there have been dignitaries in every generation since it was founded who have said and done things which have shocked their co-religionists, but, personally, I had not come up against anything so disquieting as the Birmingham prelate's public speeches, and I felt convinced that cost what it might, I could not stay in the Anglican church. Accordingly, I told my own Bishop, the Anglican Bishop of Argyll and the Isles, one of the kindest and most sympathetic of men. He lent me some books which he thought would calm my troubled mind. I read them. One was Bishop



## *Joy Cometh In The Morning*

Gore's *Roman Catholic Claims*. Bishop Gore was a "High" Church man, and I had read many of his books with profit, but I now also read for the first time Newman's *Apologia*, and I seemed to see clearly then that my case was his, and the false position of the Anglican church stood revealed.

As regards the Catholic Church, my chief difficulty lay in the fact that I had no knowledge of her. I had once, as a boy, been in the Church of St. Gudule in Brussels, and I had been recently to Benediction in a Glasgow church, otherwise I knew nothing about even the interior of a Catholic Church.

As regards Catholic Doctrine, I seem to have imbibed the main principles, but I shied at the Doctrine of Papal Infallibility, simply because I did not know anything about it! At the same time, I did not accept the coming change of faith with avidity, far from it. My whole nature recoiled at the thought of giving up my profession (being a married man with a young family, any idea of the priesthood was out of the question). There was also the inborn prejudice of generations of Protestantism. All that had ever been impressed upon me of the sly, surreptitious ways of Catholics made me shudder at this leap in the dark. There was also that fearful bogie, Disloyalty, looming in my thoughts, waking and sleeping. (I expect it is the experience of many converts, but if all have the sort of hideous dreams I went through, a collection of these experiences, published in book form, would make a certain "best seller" amongst stories of the grotesque!) But, without any jest, the devil is always enraged over a conversion and does his utmost to punish the convert. It is the trial of faith, and when it is past, one can only marvel and thank God.

Of all the diabolical whisperings, the one which stands out as having caused me the most agony of mind was this: "You have believed in the Real Presence of Christ in the

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Sacrament, as you have known it. You have adored Him in that Sacrament. Now you are going to say that that was all a mistake, that you were deluded. What guarantee have you that you will ever again be able to believe in the Real Presence, even in the Church into which you are going?" The thought that one was in risk of losing all one had hitherto held most dear was an exquisite agony.

The separation from one's relatives is a very sore trial, especially as the ones formerly one's allies, in matters of faith, have become the ones most distant now.

Protestants are not, as a rule, brought up to study the lives of the saints, and I knew very little, as a consequence, of the life of abnegation embraced by so many Catholics, but I do remember that, as I was waiting in my rectory in the very village where I had been a minister, for the publication by my Bishop in my church of the first news of my renunciation of my former allegiance, there rang through me from day to day, and hour to hour, that, for the furtherance of God's Kingdom there must be crucifixions. And I clung to that thought even when I felt that the whole of my existence was being blotted out.

"Heaviness may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning." I cannot conclude without saying that during the five years since my conversion, four of my friends, at different times and without any word first spoken by me on the subject, have come into the Church. One of these was received last year — another had been an Anglican minister, who on my going to call on him in a friendly way six months after my own conversion, told me, with no little warmth, that he considered me a Judas Iscariot. So wonderfully does our God work, and so earnestly do His saints intercede for us. *Laus Deo.*



## ROMANCE, LUNACY, OR WHAT?

PROFESSOR ERNST M. ROLOFF

DURING my life I have often unintentionally been involved in the religious difficulties of my fellow men. This should enable me to write copiously of the motley and sometimes curious and even comical reasons which lead men to faith or unbelief. As I review today in retrospect, at the ripe age of 67, my own religious development, it would seem that the following experience vitally influenced my subsequent life.

As a student of Protestant theology I spent my first two semesters in Leipsic where I was befriended by the brilliant and influential Professor, Dr. Christoph Ernst Luthardt, the leader of orthodox Protestantism and representative of the school of Erlangen. Having appointed me an honorary member on the editorial staff of the Protestant church paper *Allgemeine Evangelisch-Lutherische Kirchenzeitung*, he likewise afforded me occasionally an opportunity to be present at the learned conversations he was wont to have with men such as Dr. Franz Delitsch, the greatest Hebrew scholar of his day and translator of the New Testament into Hebrew, and with the genial Dr. Gustav Adolf Fricke.

On one of these occasions a hot dispute arose over a theological question. At this Luthardt took an old tome from his library and, after glancing over its contents, read a quotation from Martin Luther. Almost instantaneously the gentlemen calmed down and came to a common agreement. It was then the thought came

to my mind: "Whence does Luther derive such authority that after four hundred years a word from him has the weight of a Bible quotation?" The reflection had hardly occurred to me when it took expression on my lips. Naturally, the gentlemen were surprised. Some were visibly shocked and my host felt constrained to close the discussion with a friendly rebuke. The episode was soon forgotten by the rest, but for me it was the beginning of a new outlook on things.

Unfortunately, neither these informal talks nor the splendid lectures of Luthardt supplied any answer to the paramount and burning questions raised in the recent publication of the *Life of Christ* by the rationalists Bernard Weiss (1882) and Willibald Beyschlag (1885). From a theological point of view the result of my studies in Leipsic was a grand disappointment. I had begun with zest and zeal to study Lutheranism in its purity, in a classical environment, without becoming enthusiastic about it; and my dissatisfaction finally forced me to move to Berlin with a friend. For even at that time it already dawned on me that not orthodox Protestantism, but Protestantism in its modern form, constituted the logical development of the Reformation.

Just at that time the great revolutionary Adolph Harnack of Marburg had received a call to the University of Berlin, after a heated public discussion, which was terminated by a personal decision of the young emperor. After hearing the inaugural discourse of Harnack, in October, 1888, I seldom missed one of his lectures without grave reason. A greater contrast than that between Luthardt and Harnack was scarcely conceivable. While the former graciously, and even with an air of superiority, passed over objections of opponents, the latter became a most formidable and dangerous innovator who took nothing for granted, but weighed everything most critically.



## *Romance, Lunacy, Or What?*

His dogmatic-historical lectures in particular attracted me and I had soon mastered his *Lehrbuch der Dogmengeschichte*, the third volume of which came off the press just at the end of my third year in Berlin. I read the book eye to eye with the rationalistic professor, Heinrich Holtzman of Strassbourg, looking upon it as an example "of the gripping and alarming exposition of the ravages to which the contents of the New Testament were reduced after it had once been drawn into the stream of popular Hellenism."

And yet, despite all, something in the depths of my soul continually revolted against this modern trend in theology. Moreover, philosophical reasoning forbade me to accept as final the inconceivability of all transcendental truths and the inference of danger lurking in every metaphysical speculation, which made it impossible to make a definite statement concerning God and Christ. I was not content to view Christ merely as a subjective conception or an act of the human will.

When Albrecht Ritschl, the teacher of Harnack, in utter disregard of all dogma put religion on a purely practical basis, so that nothing remained of it but "the faithful discharge of our daily duties, sanctified by the belief in the providence of God, who even without the vicarious death of Christ on the cross would grant forgiveness for unwittingly committed sins," I already realized then that such a teaching could not permanently satisfy me. I anticipated, as it were, the ultimate difficulty, which later on, in 1892, upset the public during the so-called *Apostolikumstreit*: the discrepancy existing between the theological theory of Ritschl-Harnack and the future profession of its adherents as ministers of the gospel and pedagogues. How could I profess adherence to the Apostles' Creed in my official capacity, if according to the theory of these two men this attitude was irreconcilable with the original teachings of Jesus Christ?

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How could I escape the dilemma which made me a virtual prisoner?

A return to Luther whose authority has been systematically destroyed was altogether out of question, while I had never given a thought to the Catholic Church. Thus I became more and more engulfed in the negation of everything. In consequence, my departure from Berlin, which I had entered with such great hopes was fraught with the realization that this experience had not brought me the expected positive gain, but on the contrary had scattered my dogmatic convictions to the wind. A hard and bitter lot indeed!

In order to evade as far as possible these steadily increasing theological difficulties, I studied classical philology and simultaneously passed the philosophical examination shortly after completing my theological dissertation. My negative attitude toward all fixed creeds made me realize clearly that the ministry could never be my profession. In seeking a suitable occupation I therefore accepted a position as tutor during a period of two years, in a fashionable home in the Neumark. A Sunday school, which I opened for about sixty children of both sexes, proved a successful venture, but augmented my inner difficulties. My experience at a public school, where I was asked to teach religion in all classes on account of my former theological studies, caused me the same perplexity.

I made it a point to prepare well for these classes, for I was of the opinion that religion should be taught so interestingly as to become the best liked subject of all, lest the product of this education be a generation hostile to the church. Moreover I had arranged for private talks with pupils from the higher grades, who made good use of this opportunity to ask personal questions. My own past had taught me the importance of such confidential talks. But alas! in the course of time I found myself



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confronted with serious difficulties in these private interviews! To have to unburden myself before these young people of my own troubled state of mind, which harassed me for years, would have been unpardonable on my part.

My faith in religious truths had been completely undermined and I was involved in a darkness which made me shudder. The only thing salvaged from my spiritual shipwreck was a belief in the lasting values of the "moral philosophy of the Sermon on the Mount." Under these circumstances my misfortune was that I had no one in whom I could confide. Only my mother, who lived with me for five years during the time I taught at Lebus, knew of my plight and comforted me. After her demise, which occurred in 1896 — she died a saintly death and in her were verified once more the words of St. Augustine, that "many who seem to be outside the Church are within her fold" — I was all alone.

What "positive" results a serious talk with others might have had, became evident from the repeated remarks of my colleagues from Berlin, to the effect that I should quit worrying about theological negations as long as my faith remained beyond controversy.

It is not possible here to dwell at length on theological questions, nor is this intended to be a dogmatical or theological treatise. I may not, however, leave unnoticed the turning point of my life. During this period of distress a friend of mine, engaged in the medical profession, paid me a visit. He noticed at once the change I had undergone and asked for an explanation. Naturally, I hesitated to divulge my troubles and to admit my complete spiritual bankruptcy, knowing that my friend was a Catholic. After listening to my complaint, that I had sought in vain to find satisfaction in Protestantism, he asked: "Have you ever read a standard Catholic work?" I had not — and, to be candid, the thought of doing so had not even occurred to me. For the average Protestant the

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occupation with things Catholic is tantamount to a lowering of intellectual standards. Still I was aware of the absurdity of isolating myself from a religion which had given the world a Michelangelo, a Raphael, and men such as Mozart, Haydn, Beethoven, Eichendorf, Bruckner, Pasteur, etc. Consequently I did not hesitate to inquire of my friend what book he would suggest. He mentioned Adam Möhler's *Symbolik*, and promised to send the same immediately upon his return home.

I read the book with gusto, and found that it compared favorably with the best works of Protestants on the same subject. In fact it surpassed most of them in its harmonious synthesis.

It is not to be taken for granted, however, that this work at once converted me into a Catholic. And yet I had come out of my shell and was now ready for further Catholic literature. The publication *Pastor Bonus*, founded in 1889 by Professor Dr. Einig of Treves, rendered me most valuable service in the selection of reading material. With its aid I soon familiarized myself with Catholic authors, who until then had been unknown to me. What struck me most in their works was the wonderful uniformity of their opinion and the immovable foundation on which their argumentation rested. After all I had witnessed of the subjective vagaries of modern Protestantism and the state of anarchy prevalent in the modern systems of philosophy, these Catholic books gave me again that feeling of peaceful security which I had lost in Berlin.

Thus the "all-time low" of my development had been passed and I was gradually working my way upward through years of quiet study. My fatherly friend, the saintly Franciscan Ignatius Jeiler of Quaracchi, near Florence, Italy (whose hospitality I later enjoyed for months and whose classical edition of the works of St. Bonaventure even merited praise from the distinguished



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Harnack), told me long years after that my religious development had been the most logical and consequential he could imagine. In fact I can feel no little satisfaction at viewing the straight path which led directly from the harmonious and religious environments of my father's home to my present belief.

Many difficulties, nevertheless, still remained to be overcome. Regular informative talks with educated Catholics were a necessity, and unfortunately an opportunity for such conversation in my Protestant surroundings was lacking altogether. Once only, during my stay in Braunschweig, did I furtively attend a low Mass in a Catholic church with the result that I was promptly reprimanded by my authorities, who expressed great surprise at my untoward behavior. Comparatively much greater difficulties arose, however, from the aforementioned private chats with pupils. Since their questions were mostly of a religious nature, one can easily surmise the embarrassment they caused me.

The strain finally became so great that insomnia set in and an old throat affliction incapacitated me to such an extent that I was hardly able to speak and carry on my schoolwork. It was daily coming clearer to me that I would be granted no respite from this task unless I took recourse to some drastic measures. But what was I to do? Fortunately a letter received by me about this time from the Protestant pastor of St. Mary's Church in Berlin, whom I had befriended, solved the problem. I was invited to take over temporarily a German school in Cairo, Egypt. This offer greatly appealed to me. I accepted at once, and after dismissal from my Berlin post I soon left for Egypt.

On settling down in Cairo I quickly made the acquaintance of various Catholic religious. In particular I felt myself drawn to the sons of St. Francis, who had been the object of my veneration for a long time. In

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Palestine, which I visited during vacation, I came into further contact with Franciscan Fathers and experienced a state of religious exhilaration such as I had never known before. I did not yet realize at that time what an important role the good Friars were to play in my life. My religious development had come to a close and all that was needed now, as I felt, was the guidance of a capable man to direct my ship to a safe port.

This help came to me in the nick of time, and quite providentially on the very day I embarked for Europe. Standing on deck of the *Semiramis*, in the harbor of Alexandria, I glanced at the passengers coming up the gangplank when suddenly I spied a gray-haired Friar whose features impressed me greatly. I felt as if a voice within me spoke: "This is the man you are awaiting." Since the Friar, who was designated on the passenger list merely as "Padre Bernardo da Roma," was assigned a place at the same table with me, we soon were friends. During the three-day journey before reaching Brindisi, where Padre Bernardo intended to take the train to Rome, I was privileged to associate with this learned religious who had just completed the visitation of the Franciscan monasteries in Egypt and Palestine. He was destined to become shortly bishop of Sutri and Nepi in the vicinity of Rome.

Bidding me farewell at midnight, on the dock of Brindisi, he tendered me his card with the invitation to visit him in Rome at my earliest convenience. My trip, however, led me to Venice where I intended to acclimatize myself before returning to Germany, but an unusually cold April drove me back to Florence. Since, therefore, the inclement weather had forced me so far south I decided that I might now make the promised visit to Padre Bernardo and disclose my state of mind to him. During the ocean trip I had not once made mention of my spiritual difficulties.



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To the present day it remains inexplicable to me how it was that I lost Padre Bernardo's card, which he had handed to me in the darkness of the night. Be that as it may, I neither knew his full name nor his address on my arrival in Rome. Only after days of searching did I discover him in the Monastery of the Irish Franciscans, Sant' Isidoro on the Pincio, under the name of Father Bernard Döbbing, a native of Münster in Westfalia. His joy on seeing me was great, but still greater was his surprise on learning that I was a Protestant. After an hour's conversation he made the conclusive remark: "If you are convinced of all you have said, you *are* a Catholic and must act accordingly."

Nevertheless, Father Bernard Döbbing kept putting off my reception into the Church for four months, during which time he instructed me thoroughly in the tenets of the Faith. I make mention of this fact because of the current opinion among non-Catholics that the Church is ever lying in ambush "to make a catch." On July 29, 1899, I made my profession of faith in the presence of Archbishop Costantini, Father Döbbing, and the superior of the house, Monsignor Onesti. On the same day I received my First Holy Communion.

Following an invitation of the Irish Franciscans, who were extremely kind to me, I took up quarters in Sant' Isidoro where I made myself useful as organist and had occasion to learn the beauty of Catholic divine services. I lived in the monastery for four weeks in voluntary confinement, without writing one letter or leaving the premises once. After all the unrest of the last months and years I yearned for the peaceful fruition of the gifts which had come to me after such prolonged turmoil. How often in the past had I not longed for an opportunity of private confession! Even Goethe numbers confession among those things "which should not have been taken from us," and Luther himself, in his later

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life, referred to this institution as "an excellent, precious, and comforting thing."

The privilege of frequent Communion was now mine — the surpassing joy of frequent and even daily Communion which is the incomparable boon of all Catholics! Moreover, the close association with the Fathers of Sant' Isidoro familiarized me with real Catholic practice, for I was well aware that the profession of faith could be but the introductory step into the fullness of Catholic life.

Whilst I enjoyed the peace of Sant' Isidoro, the newspapers in distant Germany kept the public in a state of excitement regarding my conversion. A press reporter, one who could hear the grass growing, had gotten wind of my conversion, and without previously contacting me sent a distorted account to the Berlin papers. As a result countless letters of friends and pupils came pouring in at my *ritiro*.

It is surprising how shockingly little even the well-meaning non-Catholics know of Catholicism, not to mention the enemies of every positive religion. The main cause of this lack of understanding is to be found in the boundless ignorance on their part of all things Catholic. I tried to answer, with every possible forbearance, all letters, many of which contained expressions of sincere grief. Of the three customary appellations for converts — lunatic, place-hunter, and romantic zealot — it seems that I merited the last-named epithet. In connection with my conversion mention, namely, was made of the beautiful niece of a cardinal. In short, it remained incomprehensible how a serious-minded man could embrace the Catholic Faith after ten years of study. It dawned on nobody that the Church might after all be quite different from what she is charged to be. Still, to the credit of my friends be it said that all renewed their friendship after a lapse of time.



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Some objections to my conversion were of such a kind that they needed no refutation. One of the arguments was that to change one's faith like a garment gives evidence of a lack of principle. Under certain circumstances that may be true. However, this does not imply that those who always stubbornly adhere to their opinion are the most honest and intelligent. If that were the case progress would be impossible. After all, the Reformation itself was accomplished by men "who changed their faith like a garment." As for another argument which referred to a break of family tradition, it reminds me of the answer Count Leopold zu Stolberg gave Frederic William III of Prussia when the latter remarked: "I do not like people who become unfaithful to the faith of their fathers." Stolberg promptly retorted: "Neither do I, your Majesty, that's why I returned to the faith of my fathers." To what after all does family tradition amount in the case of religion? The renowned historian W. H. Riehl answers the question: "Why am I a Protestant?" with the frank admission: "Because my parents were Protestants." Such an attitude was already condemned by Confucius when he said: "To see the right thing and to fail to do it is lack of courage."

I am in the rare position of being able to trace back my ancestors with documentary evidence to the year 1483, and it thrills me to know that I am of one faith with my forefathers. To be sure, I have suffered much on account of my conversion, even on the part of Catholics, but God be praised for everything! I had sought my luck beyond many mountains and found it where least expected. To walk along straight and sunny paths is nothing unusual, but to climb from the depth of the dark valleys up to the mountaintops, and there to stand, bathed in sunlight, that is bliss indeed! I thank my God that He has led me to these heights where the eternal Truths have become the savor of my life.

## BY FORCE OF LOGIC

DR. EXPEDIT SCHMIDT, O.F.M.

WHEN for the first time I felt dissatisfaction with my hereditary Protestant religion and attempted to solve my doubts, I found myself in a quandary. Ever since the days when I had outgrown the more emotional piety of my early youth, which had been nourished in me by a mother of orthodox faith, deep piety, and incidentally of unusual intelligence, I could not recall any complete satisfaction taken by me in any of my religious tendencies. It may be that the reading of pseudoscientific books, published in the spirit of Moleschott and Buechner during the seventies and eighties of the past century, was scarcely conducive to the strengthening of my Faith, but neither did my Faith supply me with the necessary strength successfully to resist influences of this kind.

Religious instruction at high school did not measure up to the demands of my better self. All we were told of God's plan of salvation seemed to me a very whimsical proceeding, without any logical sequence. In the words of Goethe I might have said: "We held the parts in hand, but lacked a spiritual bond." This is not meant as a reflection on my former teachers. They did their very best. But when one of them, with whom I remained in friendly correspondence for many years, once remarked: "At all events our religion is the truest," that statement implied a very relative rating of things in which I desired logical consistency.

It did not dawn, either on my friends or on me, that



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we might possibly find in the Catholic Church what other churches failed to offer. According to our preconceived notions, the Catholic Church was for spiritual paupers, for those who lived upon externals, a quite antiquated form of Christianity. Like most educated Protestants, we were, though quite unwittingly, followers of Hegel, for whom anything settled by a dialectical process was no longer a matter for discussion. During the instruction prior to our confirmation the Catholic Church was mentioned only casually and condescendingly, as an object of slight worth and importance. On the other hand, the unchecked wrath of my personally irreproachable teacher concentrated on Zwingli and Calvin who had also assumed the role of reformers and dared to differ with Martin Luther.

It was that attitude which made me reflective for with which one of these three was the Truth to be found? Who could tell me which one of them was vested with divine authority? Naturally, nobody could answer that question. Since, then, I could not know which one of these men I should believe and trust, I finally believed and trusted none of them. Thus the result of my confirmation instruction was a "confirmation in unbelief." When the profession of faith was made as usual before the altar in the church, I remained silent. I did not want to make this profession, and neither did I want to tell a lie. If my dear mother had not already been seriously ill at that time — she died nine months later — and I had not felt that I would hurt her feelings by absenting myself, I would not have attended the confirmation ceremonies at all. Only for her sake did I participate in the ceremonies without being interested in them.

Personally I was done with every religious belief. I had not discontinued my prayers gradually, as it often happens, but had given up praying on a certain day because of the firm conviction that it was senseless. Of





*Dr. Expedit Schmidt, O.F.M.*

course, I did not make mention of it, but even if I had, nobody would have taken notice of it since, with the exception of my mother, scarcely any of my family members and immediate relatives worried much about praying. In spite of this, religious problems still interested me even though my attitude had become that of a skeptic.

Four years later, in the midst of hardship, came the turning point of my life. Thoughts of God passed again through my mind, but still I could not as yet bring myself to utter a prayer. Neither could I make up my mind to enter a Protestant church before whose doors I one day stopped. I retraced my steps and unintentionally entered a Catholic church, merely because its doors stood so invitingly open. Here I heard a sermon on the miraculous draught of fishes, which was quite different from what I had been accustomed to hear. The delivery was by no means an accomplishment of sacred eloquence, but the sermon itself was so impersonal, so appealing in its simplicity, that I at once sensed a difference in spirit. I visited the church a second time and attended Mass, but without understanding it and without praying, merely as a silent observer. Some days after I called at the rectory and confided my leanings toward certain Catholic practices to a priest, but was given such a blunt answer that it banished all I had ever heard about Catholic eagerness for proselytizing. It once for all convinced me of the contrary. "We are in no particular hurry to make people Catholics," the priest had answered with a gruff voice.

But precisely that unfriendly reception produced on me an effect quite opposite to that which might have been expected. One thing at least became apparent: the Catholic Church was quite different from what I had always been told. So I was determined more than ever to know the Catholic Faith, even though I should ulti-

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mately be forced to give it my allegiance. Despite my former disagreeable experience I called at the rectory again. This time I succeeded in getting a small Catechism which I studied carefully. I was no little struck at first by the seeming arrogance of the Church in calling herself "the pillar and foundation of Truth." This attitude at first seemed to me overbearing and presumptuous, for I had until then considered the Catholic Church as "one among many." On the other hand I was no less impressed by the very different spirit which prevailed here from that which I had experienced in the Protestant church, where nobody really could say which of the so-called Reformers had been on the right track. At all events I considered myself under moral obligation to acquire a good knowledge of this Church. I had not as yet forced myself to prayer. I took up this habit again some time later in a Catholic hospital where prayers were said in common.

God was good to me. He led me — not always over smooth roads — into the hands of a Catholic priest who was destined to prepare me for my reception into the Church. Many years later, people who had been told of my conversion, remembered to have heard the priest declare how stubbornly I had insisted upon clear proofs in support of the divine authority of the Church. After this had been done, everything else followed quite naturally. The logic of Catholic doctrine, if this expression be permitted, led me into the Catholic Church, just as the lack of logic drove me away from Protestantism. At the time of my conversion I was nineteen, and to this day I have not regretted for a single moment that I then followed the superior logic of Catholic dogma or, should I say, the superior promptings of God's grace?



## A WORLD WAR VETERAN

EDUARD SCHAEFFER, M.D.

THE writer of this article was born as the fifth child of parents to whom children were dear. His home was located in a friendly country town, within the confines of the former County Ravensberg, which held a population predominantly Protestant. The untimely death of his beloved father induced the mother to dispose of her country home and settle in a near-by city in order to give her children the advantage of a better education. In these new environments of a fast-growing industrial center our education in the elementary as well as high school was conducted wholly in the spirit of Protestantism.

Anti-Catholic prejudices, which are passed on as an heirloom from one generation to another, soon became engrafted in our young hearts. As a result the general impression given us of the Catholic Church was that of an antiquated institution encumbered with many superstitious beliefs and practices. Experience teaches that even dissatisfied Protestants tenaciously cling to this belief, a fact which explains their reluctance to seek for truth in the Catholic fold.

Religious instruction at high school received attention inversely to our advance in grades. At the elementary schools we had been tutored by deeply religious teachers, but at high school our training was left to more or less liberal-minded instructors whose vast knowledge and experience was generally restricted to a single field of science. The study of German classics, moreover, was not

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exactly conducive to the strengthening of a faltering faith. In the perusal of Schiller's works expressions such as, "Rousseau, who makes men out of Christians," or the poem beginning "When you still ruled the beautiful world," did not escape my attention.

Our faith was dealt the severest blow, however, by the theory of evolution. For years I battled with the problems arising from this modern theory until I finally came to the conclusion that if man in the course of millions of years had developed from a simple living cell, the difference between man and animal could be one only of gradation. Forthwith the existence of a soul could not be admitted. The treatise of Dennert-Godesberg, *Vom Sterbelager des Darwinismus*, afforded me little in the way of conclusive arguments, since Dennert's attack was merely directed against the principle of mechanistic selection, not against the theory of evolution as such.

An even far more dangerous implication was contained in the assumption that the development of man and humanity in its struggle for existence would just as automatically lead to undreamed progress as had been the development of higher from lower forms of life in the past. A total misconception of the word *progress* on the part of modern paganism, explains why man fails to recognize his own purpose and the necessity of redemption.

I must frankly admit that a false notion of progress misled me as well as others in the course of our studies. Most probably I would have succumbed to the noxious influences to which I was subject during the years preparatory to the medical profession, if I had not found compensation and relaxation in a new youth movement.

The *Wandervogel* youth movement, as it is called, which I joined with enthusiasm, had its beginning at the high school of Steglitz. From the congested classrooms we wandered into the open country, free from all bonds of conventionalism. We felt closer to the man on the



*Eduard Schaeffer, M.D.*

street, to the peasants in the villages, but also closer to the traditions of our country in the contemplation of historic and architectural monuments as well as in the revival of old folklore.

It would be wrong to assume that the *Wandervogel* movement was possessed of a fixed philosophy of life or even a religion. On a hiking trip through Catholic Germany, a member of our young group, a radical follower of Haeckel, once made a remark to the effect that the populace was badly in need of scientific enlightenment. My close friend, our leader Hans Breuer, who was later killed in action before Verdun, responded vehemently: "We shall do nothing of the kind! Have we a better substitute to offer?" This reverential attitude toward the traditional religion of the people was, I may say, a characteristic quality of our leader, Hans Breuer.

Through the *Wandervogel*, I received my first favorable impression of Catholicism. Since I made my studies for the greater part in southern Germany, I frequently had occasion to witness how closely people, nature, and Church were interwoven. A procession in the open, with waving banners, amid the green fields of the Bavarian plateau, a friendly Monsignor and country pastor, a visit to the churches in May during a breathing spell in my study of medicine, all these things were like a friendly greeting from the Church to a stranger. Still the result was merely a more friendly and less hostile attitude toward the Church, for new ideas had caused me to drift far away from Christianity. Whenever some younger members of the *Wandervogel* group inquired whether Hans Breuer or I were Catholic or Protestant, we were wont to answer tersely: "We are students of medicine," which was meant to imply: *The natural sciences preclude any religious or Church affiliations.*

Still, whenever I contemplated the world as a physico-chemical conglomeration in which no light, no color, no

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sound existed other than whirling atoms; and when I realized the discrepancy between a postulated infinite astronomical space and our ability to imagine space only as limited, I was tempted to say with Plato: "We live as if in a cave into which mysterious shadows fall."

Into this darkness, when troubles began to beset me, there finally shone, like a star which guides the traveler, a belief in man's eternal destiny. But this light was not yet of great effulgence. It merely pointed out the direction. But to the right and left of the road, all remained shrouded in darkness. Neither was the light close enough to quicken my spirits. It was like the rays of the stars which led us gropingly and instinctively to the desired goal.

I had served as an intern for two years in a Berlin hospital and had been married a year and a half when the great war broke out. The experience of the World War, which undermined and shattered the faith in countless soldiers, prepared and effected a revival of my own Christian Faith.

The face and bearing of a young French priest, standing before his house in the Meuse-Department through which we marched, impressed me greatly. His face, as it were, radiated a spiritual beauty of its own. A few weeks later, after the battle of the Marne, when I was ordered to stay with 200 wounded German soldiers, I made acquaintance among the French Red Cross units with many a *prêtre sac au dos* and I recall with great satisfaction the skill of one in administering ether prior to big operations.

A doctor from Alsace-Lorraine served as my adviser and interpreter. This doctor rendered me every possible assistance. He was the first educated Catholic I met and proudly professed his Faith. Having studied with the Jesuits, he was much interested in astronomy, and one evening when we were trying to espy the rings of Saturn from a vantage point before the barracks, he told me



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that he had respected and loved, and still respected all his former teachers. This greatly astonished me. Another time he firmly maintained that all social problems and international conflicts would find a peaceful solution if the world would become Christian. I did not dare to challenge this statement. I am certain that my friend in the medical profession included me in his prayers during early Mass in the prison camp.

Christmas, 1914, I was exchanged via Switzerland for a French doctor, and after a short furlough with my wife and child I soon was back in the *Champagne pouilleuse*.

During the terrible barrage of the Champagne battle, in the fall of 1915, the thought occurred to me that a stronger and clearer faith would enhance and beautify natural courage. After this battle came more quiet days. Sitting at the window of my small chamber, I would often ponder over the meaning of life. My soul was like a field which had been turned over by the upheaval of the war and was ready for good seed.

The sower who cast the first abundance of seeds into my furrowed soul was the philosopher Max Scheler. The first book of his which came into my hand was *Der Genius des Kriegeres*. I read the book twice with enthusiasm, since I failed to digest its contents at the first reading. Then I procured a collection of his lectures edited under the title: *Vom Umsturz der Werte*. For weeks it was impossible for me to read a newspaper because everything seemed so insipid compared with Scheler's writings. I realized that I would have to reverse my outlook on life if I intended to follow Scheler, but I was not loath to attempt such a transformation.

Years ago I had viewed with admiration a painting by Hans Memling, *Ritter und Priester*, on which the standing knight had almost a priestly resemblance and the kneeling priest almost the features of a knight. In a similar way Scheler depicted in lofty language the ideal of a

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Christian soldier and knight. The paradoxical saying of Christ, "Love your enemies," was not to be understood in the sense: peace at any price. The indomitable General Tilly, who prayed for his enemies before battle, was mentioned as the exemplification of a Christian soldier.

Scheler also taught me that dogmas were not given to Christians to be subjected to a critical analysis of the intellect until they collapse like a house hollowed out by termites, but were rather to be considered as revealed mysteries in which God permits us to participate and enrich our lives in contemplating them. Thus for instance, the dogma of the resurrection of the flesh, which causes unwarranted speculations does honor to our mortal bodies and constitutes, as it were, an anticipation of its impending transfiguration.

The treatise of Scheler, concerned with the ideal of love in Paganism and Christianity, was an astounding proof for the needed revaluation of what had taken place with the advent of Christianity. Likewise, the new scale of values ranging over such varied topics as the useful, vital, noble, beautiful, truthful, and holy, and their corresponding human types such as manual laborer, knight, philosopher, and saint, greatly interested me. Man could no longer be considered merely a part of *materia*. He belonged to the spiritual realm. His primary and ultimate purpose was to praise and serve his Maker. Just as a flower which does not bloom, a nightingale which does not sing, has each missed the purpose of its existence, so also man has failed in life if he does not communicate with God. *Homo non est homo nisi orans* — "man is not a man unless he prays."

The relation existing between body and soul is elucidated by an apt comparison. The human body is likened to an instrument, a keyboard of the spirit, if you wish. The soul is the player; the thoughts, words, and actions are the melody. The keyboard is comparable to the nerve



center; the connecting device, to the nerves; the motor, to the heart.

Scientific research, which I had considered with Vischers as a sort of religious occupation, was relegated to a far lower level as a result of imbibing this new theory on the "revaluation of values." Natural sciences, as a matter of fact, do not occupy themselves with the essence of things. They rather intend to achieve control of the powers of nature, making them serviceable to humanity. Though natural sciences employ logical deductions, they, after all, only carry out the divine command: Rule over the world and make it subject to yourself.

The communication of Christian ideology through Scheler brought me in happy contact again with the age-old traditions of my people. It was, therefore, but natural that I decided to go back to where I had broken with the faith of my youth. Protestant writings which came into my possession at that time were rather trite and insignificant. A treatise of the celebrated Professor Hermann of Marburg, argued that the Turks, our allies, were spiritually more closely related to us in consequence of their adoption of Kant's Imperative than the Christian nations with whom we waged war.

A footnote in the writing of Scheler acquainted me with Möhler's *Symbolik*. How fortunate it was for me that my medical profession entitled me to a private dug-out at the front and to own quarters in back of the lines. In this way I had ample opportunity to delve into the writings of Möhler, Scheler, and Kant.

After studying Möhler, I saw with the eyes of the Church that all negations and distortions, as well as the shocking denials of liberal Protestantism, were in some way to be found already in the Arians, Manicheans, and other early sects. The positive definition which Möhler gave of the Catholic conception of the Church captivated my mind. I had crossed the Rubicon and henceforth the

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rock of Peter was the goal toward which my ship of life remained headed.

Was there anything which could now deter me from my course? If through the centuries one might find among the laity and clergy evildoers and traitors to the cause of Christ, who had died impenitent, they had gone down to hell. Had not Christ Himself tolerated Judas among the select group of His Apostles? Should the office of judge be abrogated because unworthy members had sat on the bench? Should the successors of Peter no longer tend the flock because a few hirelings were to be found among them? The first thirty popes were martyrs, and gave their lives for the sheep. And how many worthy, great, and holy men adorned the Papacy in later years?

Whenever circumstances permitted, I now attended Catholic services. Occasionally I listened to a French sermon and heard some time later a sermon of a Catholic priest of the Ruthenian rite in Galicia. Books which I picked up in rectories, in deserted villages during the offensives in 1917 and 1918, were of still greater benefit to me. In Galicia I acquired in this manner a good book written in German and dealing with the Rosary, though this form of prayer is unknown to the Greek Uniates of the Ukraine.

All valuable writings of Scheler I had dispatched to my wife after reading the same, and during my short furloughs we had jointly laid a new foundation of Christian endeavor. Later on, a stay of six weeks in the hospital of my home town afforded us ample opportunity of discussing Möhler together. We deemed it most urgent to find a common foundation of life on which we might stand and also place our three children, with whom God had already blessed us. Scheler as well as Möhler had by their gifted minds let the beauty of the Church illumine the dark paths which we trod.

The forced marches during the retreat from France



in Advent, 1918, and the plight of the Fatherland, awakened religious sentiments also in many officers of our company. Whenever we took quarters for the night on a bed of straw provided by the farmers of the Eifel, conversation usually turned to religion.

Among the immediate friends of our family, Christian Science had in the meantime gained entrance, and at my homecoming I was handed a bulky volume of *Mother Mary* with the injunction to study it carefully. The perusal of a few pages of this pathological religion, full of Manichean errors, made me close the book in disgust.

At last, on the Feast of Epiphany, 1919, two "pagans" made their way to a small Catholic rectory and asked a young priest — not to be received into the Church, for we were not as yet well enough prepared — for guidance on the new road we now intended to travel. Though the priest seemed somewhat reluctant in the beginning, he waxed warm in his instructions when he became aware of our good will.

The seer Anna Catherine Emmerick of Westphalia saw in a vision the heathens entering St. Peter's in Rome through the doors, while the Protestants who embraced the Catholic Faith entered through the walls. This vision is explained as follows: Luther and others who broke with the Church have taken stones out of the Church and erected churches of their own, in which their followers were confined and excluded from the great community of the faithful. It is easier to convert heathens than Protestants. The heathens go readily and in great numbers through the open door, but those who have been detained, as it were, by the spell of heresy in separate dwellings, have great difficulty in getting out. Thus our priestly guide had quite a task to perform with hammer and chisel until he laid down the wall surrounding us. But even then, oh! how stiff were our Protestant necks and knees!

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When God has enriched man with His grace in order that he may recognize the divine truths; when the human intellect is convinced that the teachings of the Church rest on the words of Christ and have logically and organically developed, that many things surpass all human comprehension because they are divine, it but remains for the will likewise to acknowledge the truth and follow it. After six months of instruction we decided to tarry no longer, and we were privileged to recite joyfully the magnificent Nicene Creed in our Cathedral Church before our Reverend instructor.

For seventeen years we have now been enjoying the blessing of being members of the all-embracing Church. Would to God that all our brethren might find the way from banishment into the Church!

Goethe makes Faust utter the longing cry: "Where shall I find you, fountain of life? — you gurgle and refresh and I languish here in vain." Our Lord gives the answer: "He that shall drink of the water that I will give him, shall not thirst forever" (John 4:13).



## CONQUERED BY CHARITY

HANS CARL WENDLANDT

NEXT to the grace of God and the intercession of the Blessed Mother, the mediatrix of all graces, I attribute my conversion to the recognition that Truth and Love have found their highest expression in the Catholic religion.

I was born in 1898 in Sanssouci, near Potsdam, the youngest child of Friedrich Wendlandt, who from 1891 till 1918 held the position as chaplain in ordinary at the court of the last Prussian king. The Church of Peace, at which my father officiated, had been built in the style of the early Christian churches by Friedrich Wilhelm IV. The ideal location of our home in a setting of natural beauty and enhanced by works of art, such as the basilica and cross galleries, created a unique atmosphere of refinement and spirituality which made a deep and lasting impression on me. My parents, whose ambition it was carefully and lovingly to supervise my education and to gladden childhood days, enjoyed the love and esteem of their fellow men. My pious father, who faithfully defended the belief in the divinity of Christ and dauntlessly attacked Liberalism, remained loyal to the king in spite of many a slight. My mother, a perfect guardian of domestic affairs and spiritually inclined, was at the same time interested in world problems and possessed of great prudence.

Our home, which always was open to relatives and friends, was frequently honored by quite distinguished

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guests, such as Dr. von Bergmann, Bethman von Hollweg, who later became Chancellor of Germany, and other influential men. I likewise gratefully remember the years spent at the Royal Victoria High School in Potsdam, from which I graduated in 1917 with the intention of devoting myself to the study of Catholic religious orders. Already as a high-school student I felt an ever increasing interest in the great Catholic orders of the Middle Ages and later on became equally interested in the more recently founded religious congregations of the Catholic Church. My parents were in no way opposed to my work and I myself was attracted to it more and more by the heterogeneous Catholic orders of which my Protestant friends were either ignorant or misinformed. I consulted standard Catholic works and learned of the development of many religious foundations of the past, of their vast influence in the field of science. I began to understand the essence of religious life and that of the Catholic Church, which remains an enigma to so many outsiders.

With increasing knowledge on my part, Protestantism was refuted in my mind, at least insofar as it rejected the authority of the Church and the evangelical counsels. Personally, however, the Protestant belief in the existence of an "invisible and spiritual church" as a supplement to the visible, Roman Catholic Church, still seemed plausible to me. My father, who had been a decided opponent of the prevalent Luther cult and of the *Evangelischer Bund*, a violently anti-Catholic organization, and only lived long enough to witness the beginning of my Catholic tendencies, died in 1918 in the midst of his self-sacrificing labors. *Requiescat in pace!*

During the years of my attendance at the University of Berlin, from 1919 to 1922, the greatest Protestant theologian since Leibnitz, Adolf von Harnack, showed keen interest in my studies, while the first chaplain in ordinary, Ernst von Dryander, gave me every possible



assistance. The latter once remarked: "I gladly give you my support. However, I can only do so as long as you do not turn Catholic."

Adolf von Harnack advised me to submit a comprehensive treatise on the religious orders and congregations of women in Prussia to the Protestant theological faculty as the required dissertation for obtaining a degree. This I did, but when Harnack retired on account of old age, the faculty refused to accept the dissertation, though it passed upon it as a "product of unusual application." Thereupon I left the university and managed to acquire enough money as a private tutor to publish the manuscript, which came off the press in 1924, but not without subsidy of the Holy Father in Rome.

After quitting the university I devoted myself exclusively to my historical studies. Thanks to the assistance of many religious communities in Germany and Holland, and due to my repeated stay in various cloisters, I was able to acquaint myself personally with the work of the religious. I had never believed the current prattle about monasteries and convents. Nevertheless, when I became a witness to the reality of the religious spirit which radiates from the most secluded cloister, when the hitherto faint ideals of adoration, penance, evangelical poverty and charity became a living reality, the "invisible and spiritual church" of Protestantism seemed like a hollow phrase to me.

Still years of great inner struggle followed. While my mother and friends already counted on my impending conversion, I myself was held back by the thought that my calling was not clear enough to warrant such a decisive step. I was convinced that my knowledge was more intellectual than supernatural. Consequently I prayed for enlightenment and also asked others to pray for me.

Thus the fear of acting rashly led me to resist for ten years the grace of God which had illumined my intellect

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to a better understanding. At last, in spring of the year 1927, the decision came. In the beginning of May I had attempted to explain in a letter to a Catholic friend, who was much troubled by doubts in faith, the beauty and depth of the invocations of the Litany of Loretto. In doing so I realized fully for the first time that I was already a Catholic at heart. A few days later, when visiting in Magdeburg, I felt as if some mysterious power placed me before the alternative of either becoming a Catholic or losing my soul for eternity. As soon, however, as I decided to embrace the Faith, a feeling of rapturous joy surged through me. I felt as if the whole world had been given me, as if I had awakened to a new life. What I had seen manifest in saintly people, in heavenly minded religious — a burning love of God — revealed itself in my innermost soul: "For the Father Himself loveth you, because you have loved Me, and have believed that I came out from God" (John 16:27).

On the eve of the Feast of Corpus Christi, 1927, I was received into the Catholic Church in the chapel of St. Joseph Hospital in Potsdam. In the study of the religious life of the Church I found Truth and Love, the invincible powers of the kingship of Christ, the seal of His disciples.



## DEFLATING PANTHEISM

DR. ROBERT BRAUN

THE oft-employed phrase, "roads to the Church," in connection with a conversion is really most appropriate, and in my case it was a long and arduous journey. At the beginning of my road of life stood Judaism, in which I was born and reared, and which led me to the Synagogue every Sabbath. However, I did not feel at home at this place of worship. I did not grasp the meaning of the ceremonies and, moreover, the conduct of my companions was so scandalous, their remarks about the services and teachers so frivolous, that I often envied my Christian friends who had at least the advantage of worshipping in a truly religious atmosphere.

Our home afforded no religious inspiration whatever. My father was a confirmed liberal who had no use for his own or other religions. In fact, all religions were but business enterprises to him, and he maintained that the ultimate purpose of life was to be a "gentleman of principles." But even though my father lived up to his maxims in a remarkable degree, such as I perhaps shall never achieve in mine — his life was spent in work and sacrifice for his large family — I on my part remained dissatisfied in my craving for something higher than my own self.

Since I could not dedicate my life to art, as had an older brother who poured out his whole life into poetry, there remained for me only the veneration or cult of Nature. This revealed itself to me — confined to the limits of a metropolis — in the blossoming wild ash and

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linden trees which dotted the famous Ringstrasse of Vienna. The sturdy stems of these trees, the swaying boughs, the tender foliage in springtime, the colorful transmutation of the leaves in autumn — all this bespoke a stupendous vitality outside of me, a spring of life, from which not only the trees but all creatures derived their origin. It was this thought which gave me the blissful assurance that nothing untoward could happen to me, that I also could unfold myself joyfully according to my innate potentialities. I was a pantheist, and intimacy with nature and joy in it was my religion.

Of course, I soon became acquainted with the reverse side of my Nature cult. If I arrogated to myself the right to develop as freely as a tree, which shoots forth its branches and leaves, I was headed for an egotistic self-complacency which would make me inconsiderate of others. The bitter experience of my first friendship taught me how this pagan product struck back at me like a boomerang. I had, even though unconsciously, attempted to make my friend subservient to me, but was soon to realize that he had a soul of his own which asserted its freedom in resisting such an attempt, and so on sane grounds effected a dissolution of the world in which I lived. Thus I came to grief, but at least I had discovered that no spiritual security could be found in the contemplation of the trees and birds, of the flowers and the elements.

In the meantime I had become an adherent of theosophy, in which I found a continuation of my cult of Nature. The theosophists also spoke of "the workshop of Nature," "the animal soul," and the like, all of which irritated my self-complacency. What, indeed, was meant by the teaching of the "masters," who were supposed to lead historic movements, if every individual carried within his bosom the laws of his own development, which patterned him just as an oak leaf is patterned by its in-



born qualities? This was tantamount to an acknowledgment of faith on authority, which I decried. The veneration of a higher person was quite foreign to me and finally caused me to sever my membership in the cult of the theosophists.

It was wholly in accordance with this period of my development that Jesus Christ also should have remained a stranger to me. I refused to acknowledge Him as God. At the most He seemed to be a religious genius, just as Napoleon was a military genius. Likewise I viewed the Catholic Church only as a freethinker would, with the eyes of Stirner and Nietzsche.

However, we undoubtedly live under the care of our angels who strive to correct our mental aberrations, and so it came about that the perusal of the books of Jakob Böhme, to which theosophy referred me, became the turning point of my life. A rising distrust of theosophy, which I suspected to be a mixture of European and Indian ideas, made me hope to find the original sources of Böhme's writings. But here, in fact, I found the great idea which was to dominate my reasoning throughout the ensuing years, and which made me increasingly desirous of joining a Christian church without deciding on any particular one.

In consequence of the mystical conception of Christianity contained in the writings of Böhme, I became disengaged from the more or less rational inquiry whether Christ was merely a "genius," "a great man," a "typical Jew" or a "supernatural being." For in these writings He did not figure as a historical, but as a divine person, as the redeemer of Nature, as the abrogator of the guilt of Adam, as a prototype of holiness who stood above humanity. And so I finally realized that every self-complacency in presence of such exalted dignity was sheer folly and that it was best to become and feel again as a child and a creature.

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While meditating on trees in the past, I had only seen the unfolding of life from the invisible depths of Nature. But now the thought arose in me that it behooved a deity to sacrifice himself in order that Nature might live and life unfold itself. Thus the father must sacrifice himself in order that the children may thrive. A gifted man dedicates his life to humanity by a discovery which will benefit mankind, and he becomes greater in proportion to his unselfish devotion to his cause. After all, each one of us sustains his life through the necessary nourishment, but the food of which we partake is doomed to lend its existence to ours. Consequently, a mysterious relation exists between sacrifice and life.

What then would be more natural than that a God, the Supreme Being, should offer Himself, sacrifice Himself for all? God was not a tyrant, an appellation with which I had often branded the Saviour; but His power, yea, His omnipotence consisted, in my estimation, in His infinite goodness which urged Him to make Himself a victim for all. Only in this manner the visible Nature could continue to exist.<sup>1</sup> Long before I had found the door to the Church, long before I became acquainted with the meaning of Mass, this sacrifice in which we all wondrously participate, I felt that no greater lifegiving source could exist, than the mystery of the Last Supper.

I had long discontinued my affiliations with the Jewish religion since a church membership seemed incompatible with my religious conception. Still I felt that this neutral position, this detachment from definite religious groups, was unsatisfactory. All the while I was a so-called "liberal Christian" who held Christ in highest esteem and regularly read the New Testament, but this brought about no change of life. Like a poor student I lagged behind in all things because I had flunked in the main school. Since

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<sup>1</sup> NOTE: These are the thoughts which led Mr. Braun to the faith. They are not a theological interpretation of God's attributes.



*Dr. Robert Braun*

I had married and had one child, I grew even more disconcerted. I was pressed to look for a unifying power to which my beloved ones and I could subject our minds and hearts and find ourselves in Him. It is true that I had already a vague feeling that this could be found only within the Catholic Church, for I had often attended Mass as an unbeliever, but I could not as yet relieve myself of my deeply rooted suspicions.

One day — it was at the time of the first Jewish persecutions in Germany — I read an article by Father Cyril Fischer, O.F.M., which dealt lucidly with the mission of the Jewish people. The expositions of this eminent Franciscan were not only a solace in our painful humiliations, but likewise a corroboration of my own conclusions on this subject. I felt as if a friend had written to me and wrote a letter of appreciation to the unknown author. Soon I received a friendly response, and with it an invitation for a discussion at the Franciscan monastery in Vienna. Here my last doubts were dispelled and at length I found the bridge to a new life, which I had sought so long. My conversion, which had been such a wearisome process, was now like a ripe fruit which fell into my lap. I arranged for instructions in the Catholic religion at once and was baptized the same year.

I must add here that I lived on the outskirts of Vienna at this time where my Jewish ancestry was well known. In the beginning, therefore, my attendance at Catholic services was quite embarrassing, since the faithful eyed me with an air of suspicion. Their glances seemed to indicate that they distrusted me and considered my conversion a clever maneuver to curry their favor for personal gain.

For this reason I frequently attended Mass in one of the big parishes in the city where my presence did not attract the attention of the other worshippers. After a while, however, I considered this as cowardice and resolutely

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frequented the services in my home parish. As a rule I stood in a corner of our beautiful Gothic church, trying to feel that the motley group of faithful were all brethren in Christ. I cannot say how happy I was when I merged with this devotional assembly, when I knelt with the crowd to receive the benediction with the Blessed Sacrament and joined in the beautiful hymns of St. Thomas Aquinas in praise of the Eucharistic King! Especially when my wife and daughter accompanied me to church and my little daughter knelt at my side and sang with me, my joy knew no bounds.

How I first began to understand the deeper significance of the Mass and the liturgical year, which centered about Christ who gives Himself to all under the species of bread and wine is the story of my rich inheritance in the Church. As time passed, I discovered more and more the hidden treasures of my Faith which is such an inestimable blessing for our miserable existence that there remains really nothing else to do than to thank God unceasingly for this great gift.



## CORRECT BIBLE READING

EMMA DESSEWFFY

MY PARENTS were pious and self-sacrificing people. My father, Denis Dessewffy of Cserenek and Taokö, was one of the most famed heroes of the Hungarian War of Liberation (1848-49). His opponents even hanged him in effigy, but with God's grace he succeeded in making his escape to Switzerland, where he later married my mother, Adele Jourdan. The ancestors of my mother were likewise emigrants, coming from an ancient family of Huguenots.

I was born in the year 1858 in Geneva. A few years later, in 1863, general amnesty was declared, and my father returned to Hungary with his family. At the age of 14 I was sent back to Switzerland to be tutored by my grandmother, a very cultured woman of deep piety. She it was who gave me a new outlook on life by interesting me in social work, to which I had always taken a great fancy. During this time I studied the holy Gospels diligently and attempted to follow their injunctions. In order to broaden my knowledge, I likewise read many books dealing with other religions. However, due to an ingrained prejudice, I was not interested in the Catholic Church. This Church, I was told, so full of superstition and idolatry, was the work of man. Three times I had a chance to convince myself of the contrary, but each time I haughtily resisted God's grace.

As all people on earth, I was also subject to many trials and temptations. During this time my dearly beloved

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mother died. I remained in Geneva until I became of age and first returned to Hungary when my brother lost his wife, and when in consequence his small children sorely needed attention and care. Thus I was privileged to give them all maternal care though I never became married myself. I devoted myself wholeheartedly to my new calling, and after the children grew up I also tried to do social work in the community. Social problems engaged my attention very much, and it was upon my initiative that the patronages for the abolishment of prostitution and other valuable organizations came into existence.

Since my brother had not remarried, we lived together until his death, and until my sixty-fourth year I was most happy in the fulfillment of my God-given mission. Then, suddenly, everything within and around me seemed to collapse: the Communistic insurrection, the death of my brother and of my best friends, among whom I deplored the loss of Count and Countess Tisza — all brought such mental and physical strain that I was forced to withdraw wholly from my former occupation.

In this spiritual crisis and abandonment I grew helpless, until after long hours of meditation I once more derived hope and consolation from the Bible. There my faltering soul found the answer to its problems and my spirits were again soothed. This time the perusal of the Sacred Scriptures, however, familiarized me quite startlingly with the origin of certain Catholic teachings and practices based on the words of Christ and the Apostles. The clear references in the Epistle of St. James to the necessity of good works, of Confession, and Extreme Unction — all of which have been relegated by Protestantism — did not escape my attention. Likewise, the appointment of St. Peter as supreme shepherd in the Gospel of St. Matthew supported the claims of the Papacy.

A renewed struggle began in my soul at this new discovery. In this dilemma two friends came to my assistance



who acquainted me with their confessor, a Franciscan priest. This learned and spiritual man henceforth became my spiritual director. His advice, as well as the books which he put at my disposal, benefited me greatly. Gradually all things which thus far had seemed mysterious to me assumed new meaning and importance. Even the great dogma of Transubstantiation was no longer a stumblingblock for me — the one-time inveterate Protestant. Humbly, I finally bowed my head and begged for admission into the Catholic Church, January 20, 1928. I made my profession of faith with the full conviction that it contained the unadulterated teaching of Christ.

In a beautiful comparison St. Augustine once likened the human soul to a dove which refused to return to its safe tower until a strong hawk compelled it to seek refuge there once more. My soul, too, is like a dove which found its sure abode in the safety of the Catholic Church, at the feet of the Eucharistic King.

## BETRAYING ONE'S ANCESTORS

HENDRIK PIETER MARCHANT

AT THE time of my reception into the Church, on December 21, 1938, I held the position of Minister of Education, Art and Science of the Netherlands. The cabinet of State was composed of such varied elements that all popular parties could find therein supporters of their convictions. At the time of the creation of the new cabinet in May, 1933, I had become the leader of the "Liberal-Democrats" who numbered six of every hundred members of the second chamber of deputies. At this time there also existed the three "right" factions, viz.: the Catholic Party, the Anti-Revolutionary Party, and the Christian-Historical Party. The latter two were of Protestant origin and the three together were powerful enough to sustain a cabinet which abided by Christian principles. However, due to the pressure of circumstances, the liberal parties were assimilated by the "Leftists" in 1933.

This put me on the spot as far as my intended conversion was concerned, for evidently, difficulties were to be anticipated if a "minister of the Left" became a Catholic, even though he did so of his own volition. Since an important bill was to be drafted curtailing all expenditures for educational purposes, I felt it my duty to remain in office till the bill had been passed upon. In the meantime I refrained from broaching the subject of my conversion. Nevertheless, I did mention on various occasions that my conviction in religious matters had changed and this I did for the purpose of forestalling any accusation of



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hypocrisy on the part of my acquaintances. Still, in spite of this reticence, the news of my actual conversion seeped through. My colleagues in office became incensed, in consequence of which I tendered my resignation which was accepted. A hot political debate ensued, but when it became evident that my motives had been misconstrued, the excitement gradually abated.

After reading *Menschen, die zur Kirche kamen* during my study of Catholicism, I became aware of the fact that every conversion to the Mother Church has always been commented upon in the same manner by non-Catholics, stigmatizing it namely with the charge of "treason!" However, the answer to the question: "What actually has been betrayed?" cannot readily be found. To maintain that a convert has "betrayed" his church is a rather hazardous assertion, for immediately the question bobs up, what have the leaders of the Reformation "betrayed" when they left the Catholic Church? Is it not a rather praiseworthy act for a prodigal son to redeem the treason of his forefathers?

In my estimation but one answer is possible to the charge of treason: A convert "betrays" that he and his ancestors were not as unhampered and unprejudiced in their religious convictions as they were wont to make the world believe, and that their aversion to the Church was based solely on ignorance and preconceived notions. The readers will readily understand that it is not exactly a pleasant sensation for one who felt himself to be intellectually superior to Catholics to make the discovery that such self-conceit was unwarranted. The fact remains that whoever has the courage of his conviction is branded as a traitor even by those who are not affiliated with any church and as a rule indifferent toward religion.

In one instance a man who laid claim to an education, the director of a large public library, gave a typical demonstration of narrow-mindedness in regard to the

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Catholic religion. I had asked for a book by a Catholic authority which was not to be found in the library. The director apologized with the remark: "But, you know that Catholic books are not read." Since sensible people did not ask for Catholic books he meant to say, such books need not be listed, for only sensible people frequented the library. Is such an attitude not tantamount to the betrayal of the Truth?

It is my firm conviction that it is mainly prejudice which keeps people from joining the Church. The Church is condemned before her claims have been investigated. Is it not strange that those who groundlessly accuse the Church of being hostile to scientific progress are open to the charge of discountenancing any unbiased study of the Church?

The incapability of many people to understand why the Church of Christ insists on certain definite articles of faith is not surprising in view of the subjective beliefs of countless non-Catholics. Outside of the Catholic Church but few profess belief in the divinity of Christ. It is true that some few still permit their children to be baptized "in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost," but they no longer believe in the Blessed Trinity, and the denial of the divinity of Christ naturally involves the denial of a Church founded by Him. For such people it is impossible to believe that Christ imposed a definite belief on His followers, and that man is not free to believe what he chooses.

Those who reflect upon this will come to understand how a man who grew up in liberal Protestantism was deterred from making his submission to the Catholic Church until his sixty-fifth year.

As a member of the Board of Education at the Hague and later as Minister I came in contact with Catholic lay-people and priests, for in Holland the confessional primary schools are put on a par with the public schools as



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far as government subsidies are concerned. My contact with Catholics made me inquisitive. I wished to know the quintessence of Catholicism, and began to read books on this subject. In the course of my studies I found the teachings of Catholic theologians quite reasonable, while I must confess that the teachings of Protestant theologians never seemed very convincing to me, regardless of whether they were orthodox or liberal-minded. Some of the latter ever shared the opinion of Lessing that the quest of truth is more important, than its discovery. These advance the opinion that truth cannot be found. They are convinced that if man thinks that he has found the Truth, he should consider this a sign that he has gone awry. He must retrace his steps once more.

This absurd teaching did not appeal to me. On the contrary, when I found the Truth I thanked God from the bottom of my heart. One thing remains incomprehensible to me; namely, the fact that many people on set purpose close all avenues of thought which might lead to Rome for the sole reason that no matter how obviously they are wrong, they decline to acknowledge the Roman claims. The explanation for this can only be found in the uncompromisingly hostile attitude of the so-called Reformers toward the "idolatrous" teachings of the Church, a hostility which led them to consider the Church, as some do in our age, as public enemy number one. Moreover, Protestant tradition has to the present day kept alive all past grievances and accusations against the Church, though these have been refuted time and again.

In the papal Encyclical *Mit brennender Sorge*, directed to the German Bishops (1937), the Pope enjoined upon them to preserve among the faithful the purity of faith in God, in Christ, in the Church, and in the priesthood with its primacy. The enemies of the Church have always launched their attacks against the aforementioned doctrines in the reverse order. Their first attack was directed

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against the priesthood and the primacy, the second against the Church, which cannot exist without the priesthood, and then followed the bland denial of the Divinity of Christ and finally the rejection of the belief in a personal God. A consequential development after all. It is impossible to remove one stone from the structure of the Church of Christ without endangering the whole. Every attempted alteration was, therefore, bound to lead to a disintegration.

Joseph Hubery, who wrote a small book, *La Conversion*, distinguishes three categories of converts: those who are converted in consequence of some sudden, overwhelming experience; those who are converted for sentimental reasons; and those whose conversion was more or less a matter of logical deduction. By this I do not mean to say that Catholicism appeals only to the mind, that it is exclusively a matter of the intellect. By no means. Faith is not contrary to reason, but neither is it a product of the intellect.

Some people admit the reasonableness of Catholic teachings, but still remain unbelieving. They are lacking in or not cooperating with the supernatural light of Faith. Naturally, the mysterious influence of God's grace on the intellect and will of man can never be demonstrated. It is a matter of experience to those whom God calls from darkness to light. God's grace may even work in us without making us conscious of it. Undoubtedly God's grace prompted me to make a study of the Catholic Faith, and for this reason I consider it my duty to be of assistance to others in their quest for true happiness. Our own calling makes it also incumbent on us to study our religion thoroughly, for we shall never be able to impart to others that with which we are not familiar ourselves. We all should be missionaries of Christ in virtue of Holy Confirmation.



## FROM THE SYNAGOGUE TO THE MESSIAH

FRANZISKA VAN LEER

THE Thora redeemed me not. She cursed me with the knowledge that I was a sinner." — Werfel, *Paul Among the Jews*.

"Do not think that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets. I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill" (Matt. 5:17).

My way from the synagogue to the Church is another proof for the truth of the words of Christ. Even though the road I chose often ended in a blind alley, God's grace called me back each time that I might not miss the goal at the end.

I was born of Jewish parents in Amsterdam, in the year 1892, and attended religious instructions at a very early age. I also studied Hebrew in order to be able to read the Sacred Scriptures. My mother was very pious. She reared me according to the strict customs of the Mosaic Law, and I not only got to know but also to love the customs and religious cult as prescribed by our belief.

The books of Moses which were read on the Sabbath in the Synagogue interested and captivated me, since they contained the history of my people, the chosen people of God. My mother also taught me to be grateful for my Jewish extraction and membership among God's people.

Even more than the books of Moses, I liked the prophetic books of the Old Testament, from which also passages were read on the Sabbath. The description

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of the coming of God's Kingdom on earth, when the Messiah would rule, when the wolf should dwell with the lamb, and the people would convert their swords into ploughshares, for no people would any longer rise against another, and a small child would lead them filled my young soul with great yearning for the coming Redeemer (Isa. 2 and 11).

During religious instructions and also at home, I often asked when all this would come to pass, but no one could give me a satisfactory answer. At times I began to doubt the truths of the prophecies since the answers of my parents and teachers were not only vague, but contradicted each other. One answer was: "The Messiah will come on the clouds as Judge"; another, "He will be born as Man"; a third, "The Messiah is neither God nor man, but a period of time"; and lastly, "If peace rules, this is the Messiah."

Since compliance with the burdensome Mosaic Law seemed to bring neither my people nor me closer to the time of the promised Redeemer, I cast off the yoke of the law at the age of eighteen, in order to become free. I left home and instead of attending high school as my father wished, I hoped to make a living as an office girl in foreign countries. I wanted to be independent, and to follow my own will and whims.

However, life disappointed me very much, but I was too proud to admit it. In order to forget my grief, I frequently sought distraction in the theater. The operas of Wagner impressed me most profoundly, especially since practically the same theme, a yearning for redemption, which is to be found in the writings of the prophets, finds its expression in a related manner in the Wagnerian melodies. Here I saw people ensnared in sin, and in each instance, there came one to redeem them through sacrifice. In the opera *Hollander* Senta sacrifices himself; in *Lohengrin*, the knight; in *Tann-*



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*häuser*, Elizabeth; in the *Nibelungenring*, even the gods are made to atone for sin, since no one offers to sacrifice himself. But *Parsifal*, which I saw in the course of years quite frequently, was the most gripping experience of all, since he seemed the very prototype of the Redeemer.

Nevertheless, the gulf between God and man, life and religion, science and faith, Church and world, seemed too vast to span. I did, however, for a long time consider art the connecting link between God and man, and labored in the service of this "mediator." I attempted in word and writing to convince people of the beauty of modern painting, plastic, music, and architecture. But the war with its dire consequences soon paralyzed my activities. And how was it possible to believe in the Messiah, in a kingdom of God, a kingdom of peace, while precisely the opposite of that happened which the prophets and *Parsifal* glorified? Not swords were forged into plows, but plows into swords, yea, even church bells were converted into armor.

I wished to heal wounds, to become a Red Cross nurse, but I could not see others suffer; for I had no answer to the despondent query of the dying. Why suffering? why war? why death? I had lost my faith and was unable to inspire hope in others without lying.

All this made me withdraw from the world. I read and studied, pored over books of all times and peoples to find an answer to those questions which no event had brought so to the foreground as the World War. Whence did man come? Whither is he going? Why is he on earth? What is the meaning of sorrow?

But nowhere did I find a satisfactory comprehensive answer. I knew that the sages of all ages had worried themselves with these same problems. Some had tried to find an answer in religion, some in sociology, and others had tried a practical solution. However, the "garment of Truth" was rent in parts, everybody seemed to have

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a piece of it, but where was the "undivided, seamless garment" to be found?

I did not know that nineteen hundred years ago somebody had already raised the question, "What is Truth?" while Truth in the person of the God-Man stood before him, for I was not acquainted with the Gospels. As a child I had not been permitted to read them, and now I did not care to read them, for I took them to be legends.

Thus I groped in the darkness of earthly wisdom, and when men had no answer to my queries, I took recourse to the stars, astrology. But here I saw merely the grimace of an inescapable fate which excluded the freedom of the will, grace and redemption.

So dense had the darkness to grow in and around me, till God let the light shine into the darkness, "the Light which illumines every man coming into this world," the light to which 1900 years ago my people had closed their eyes in a blind obstinacy, which still holds them captives to the present day.

*The Passion of St. Matthew!* I had often heard this great opus of Bach. I had wept over the suffering, loving Christ, without Him being anything else to me but a mythical figure like Parsifal.

Then, in 1918, I read the works of Tolstoi, in particular his *Diary* and *My Gospel*. Here Christ became a human reality. He was of flesh and blood, had words of peace, of love, as no one before Him. In this way He could be my ideal, as Tolstoi intended. Yet, I revered Him merely as a perfect man, not as God.

O how long is the path which leads from the veneration to the adoration of Christ! No man can tread it without God's grace! How far was I still away from faith!

After reading Tolstoi, I was determined to carry out literally what the Gospels enjoined. I gave away all my belongings, as Tolstoi suggested, in order to enter the service of a peasant in whose employ I could earn my



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bread with hard labor. I would have liked to preach, to teach the Gospel to the people, but who would hear me? Perhaps good example was sufficient.

Still I felt my impotency to change the world, but at last I decided "to do something about it." I wrote a letter to the German Emperor requesting an audience. I wished to induce him to make peace at once with all available means. It was in August, 1918. In order to be certain that my letter would reach its destination, I asked a princess to transmit the same. A polite, but declining answer from the Emperor was the result. "Now a revolution will come," I remarked to the princess. I saw no other way out of the dilemma. On November 9 the revolution broke out. The leaders of the revolt seemed to me at first to be messengers of salvation and peace. However, I was disappointed in my expectations. The people and the world remained unchanged.

The tide of affairs now tore me along. I hoped to be a mediator in the strife, to bring about peace and understanding, but all attempts were of no avail. In Munich, where I lived among the radicals at this time, Eisner was murdered. A reign of terror followed. When the white troops entered the city in May, 1919, to liberate Munich, I knew that I would face arrest. I had been living in close quarters with the revolutionary leaders, and was bound to be considered an accomplice. As expected, I was arrested at once and was subjected to a cross examination for five hours.

Apparently the authorities were baffled in my case. I spoke continuously about the Gospels, about world peace, about Parsifal, and the Prophets. One of the interrogators asked why I did not become a Christian if I was convinced of the Gospels. I laughed to his face. "Those few drops of water cannot change a person. Christ was a Jew as I am. I shall never become a Christian, if I am not one already in sentiment." It was 10 o'clock p.m. For the

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night I was locked in an underground vault of the castle where I had been on trial, for the prisons were overcrowded.

This night was the most memorable of my life. I had not as yet been sentenced, but there seemed slim chances of acquittal. The guards spoke about me as if I were already doomed to die before the firing squad. I was convinced that this night was my last and began making a balance account of my life. I realized that it was imperfect and incomplete. This could not be the end of the road, for I had not yet found Truth and Peace, and the Kingdom of God. But where could I find these?

In my utter despair, I sent an ultimatum to God. If He existed, He could not let me die without having found Him. If I should die the next day, I would know that God did not exist, for in that case, my life would have been senseless and to no purpose. However, if I should live and find release, I would know that God existed, and thus He might reveal His will to me and accept my unconditional surrender to Him.

The next morning I was set free. I have never seen the legal records of my trial, and for this reason am unable to determine on what ground and by whom I was liberated. More important than the natural causes of my release is the supernatural effect: my conversion.

It is impossible to describe how God broke my obstinate will which revolted against being baptized. I was willing to do everything for God apart from becoming a Catholic. The prejudice of my Jewish past, but also ignorance of everything pertaining to the Catholic Faith and Church, such as a total misconception of the words *grace* and *redemption*, held me back. A few books of Father Heribert Holzapfel, O.F.M., showed me finally with convincing arguments that the ultimate conclusion to be drawn from the Gospels must be baptism, because "Christ is God."



Franz Werfel, the author of *Paul Among the Jews*, lets the Apostle Paul answer the questions of Gamaliel, why he became a believer in Christ, with the words: "How can I speak of Him? How can I speak of the moment when the light of heaven gushed into my blood, when I came blind into a new world? My heart is rent asunder when I think of it. Can a man speak of the moment of his birth?"

Human words fail to describe the light, which the Church calls grace, and which suddenly falls into the darkness of an erring and benighted soul. It would seem like a profanation were I to attempt to portray how the shining truth of the Divinity of Christ took possession of my soul. I asked Father Holzapfel for baptism. At once! I was refused on the grounds that my knowledge was insufficient. But I did not wish to wait after I had discovered the Truth, and realized that the Church was the long-sought and ardently desired kingdom of God, which wants to embrace all people and nations, just as the Prophets foretold. I grew despondent on account of the delay, but Divine Providence came to my rescue.

Since I had retained my Dutch citizenship, I was expelled from the country. In fact, all foreigners were evicted at that time. However, a return to Holland, to my family, would have made my conversion impossible. Therefore, I wished to receive Baptism and the other sacraments by all means prior to my eviction, for then nobody could rob me of them. Nothing, however, could induce the experienced Father to baptize me. He insisted that I return to Holland and take instructions there.

In my despair I went to the Franciscan church early in the morning, just at the distribution of Holy Communion. A "Power went forth from Him, which healed all." It touched also my poor and aching heart. I saw the people approaching the rail and my soul hungered after the white substance whose name I knew not, but

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which nevertheless revealed itself to me, and attracted me with irresistible force. I also wanted to receive as the rest. I hurried into the monastery; pleaded with Father to at least give me that "white substance" if he did not want to baptize me. Naturally, he remained adamant to all my pleadings. He instructed me briefly on the Holy Eucharist with the result that my hunger became more intense.

Finally Father said: "I shall bring you a Dutch priest, a countryman. He will refer you to a priest in Holland to whom you may go." "No," I remonstrated vehemently, "I need no Holland priest. Bring me the priest who distributed the 'white particles,' he will not refuse me this grace." With a shake of the head Father left me in order to fetch the Holland priest. He could scarcely have guessed the priest I requested since a different one distributed Communion every fifteen minutes. And after all, which priest would baptize me without preparation?

However, once more Providence came to my rescue. When the door of the parlor opened again, I recognized to my great surprise the priest whom I had seen distributing Holy Communion in church. He was a Hollander. Our conversation was very brief. In reply to his question what I wished, I answered "Baptism." Thinking that I had already been instructed and merely desired to be baptized by a Dutch priest, he made no objection. Without intent to practise deception, I made no mention of the fact that I had not as yet been instructed, and Divine Providence permitted that this Dutch priest found out only after two days that my knowledge of the Catholic Faith was very meager.

Developments followed swiftly. On June 13, 1919, I made the acquaintance of the Dutch priest, Fr. Laetus Himmelreich, O.F.M.; on the 15th I was baptized, and on the 16th I had to leave Germany in accordance with the eviction decree. On the Feast of the Blessed Trinity



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the command of Christ: "Go and teach all nations, baptizing them in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost" found its fulfillment in my life! I became a child of the Church, of the Kingdom of God on earth, for which I had yearned so long and passionately. High above all these joys and graces stood, like a radiant sun, the white Host, Christ in the Blessed Eucharist, He the long-desired, unknown Messiah, the Redeemer, the King, the Lord, the God of Israel!

On this and all following days my prayers of thanksgiving were accompanied with the fervent plea which our Mother Church couches in the following words on Good Friday:

"Almighty, eternal God, who repellst not even Jewish faithlessness from Thy mercy, harken to our prayers which we make in behalf of the blindness of that people, that, recognizing the light of Thy truth, which is Christ, they may be delivered from their darkness."

## THROUGH LOVERS' LANE

IRMA DI LENA

THE first causes of my conversion may be traced back to the environmental influences of my childhood days. I was born as the first child of a mixed marriage in a good-sized town of Switzerland. Although my Protestant father permitted my mother full freedom of religious worship, he nevertheless insisted on the baptism of his children in the Protestant faith. Consequently I was baptized a Protestant. As soon as I began to speak, my mother taught me the usual Catholic prayers and likewise endeavored to give me a Catholic education as far as circumstances permitted. To my great delight our minister did not object to my attendance of religious classes with Catholic pupils during my first years at school. However, when our class was prepared for the first confession, my religious development unfortunately received a sudden jar and later a complete change.

The Catholic priest in whose parish limits our family resided demanded that I be rebaptized conditionally before being admitted to the Sacraments, but in this he met with stubborn resistance on the part of my father. Besides neglecting to give a plausible explanation for his demands, the priest aggravated the situation by imprudent remarks to such an extent that my mother also quit going to church from this day on. I do not maintain that my mother acted rightly in doing so, but at all events it was because of this episode that I was henceforth reared exclusively as a Protestant.



Even after I reached maturity I had many Catholic friends with whom I occasionally visited Catholic churches. The evening services, conducted in May and October, buoyed my spirits in particular and I felt grieved that I could not enjoy all this as a Catholic. Still God guided me wonderfully and the year 1923 was to mark the beginning of my conversion.

At that time I became acquainted with my future husband, a member of the Catholic Kolping Society, who never missed Mass on Sunday nor his monthly Communion. My heart swelled with pride and joy whenever I saw him pass our home on Sunday on his way to the eight o'clock Mass. The thought that I could not accompany him filled my heart with sorrow. As soon as our friendship became a deep mutual affection my fiancé informed me candidly that he would consider a marriage only with the express understanding that all children resulting from the wedlock would be reared in the Catholic Faith. However, he likewise promised not to use coercion in any form to sway my religious conviction. I consented to the terms, promising to rear all children Catholic according to the best of my abilities. Our marriage took place in October, 1924, at the shrine of the Blessed Virgin in Maria Einsiedeln, Switzerland. The exhortation of the priest who performed the marriage ceremony was most beautiful and inspiring.

During the first years of our union we lived in various countries wherever business duties called my husband. We attended Mass jointly on Sundays and I felt grieved as often as I saw my husband approach the Communion rail because I could not accompany him. My husband, faithful to his promise, never discussed religion with me. In fact he repeatedly declared that a conversion on my part must be entirely voluntary and not be motivated by the desire to please him.

In 1926 God blessed our union with a boy who was

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baptized Catholic. Soon after, we again left Switzerland. My husband never went to work nor retired, without praying fervently with me, and since I remembered the Catholic prayers of my early childhood, I taught my child to lisp them as I had done years ago. The longer I lived with my husband the more determined I became to become a Catholic, convinced that the Catholic Faith was the only means of salvation.

A few years later — thanks to the goodness of God — I was at last to share this happiness with my husband. He had departed for Egypt with the agreement that I follow him some time later. I planned to spring a surprise on him by coming to him as a Catholic. For this reason I approached our pastor to make arrangements for taking instructions. However, he informed me that it would take six months and that it would be impossible to complete the course before the date of my scheduled departure. After my arrival in Egypt, therefore, we talked things over with a German Franciscan whom my husband had befriended. After an additional three months' instruction I was finally admitted to the Sacraments. My Reverend instructor, Father Cyriacus Michels, O.F.M., a widely traveled missionary, was not only an interesting instructor but also succeeded in dispelling all my doubts.

In the first part of December, 1929, I received conditional baptism in the sacristy of St. Joseph's Church, Cairo, Egypt. Two lady friends from Switzerland acted as sponsors. On the same day I made my first Confession and on the following day I received Holy Communion for the first time. My husband accompanied me to the rail and words fail me to describe what bliss and peace filled my soul. When shortly after the Bishop of Alexandria came to Cairo, I received the Sacrament of Confirmation, that I might henceforth fearlessly profess my faith.

Since my conversion I have faithfully complied with



## BEYOND HUMAN LIMITATIONS

SIGRID UNSET

IF ALL the converts who have returned to the Catholic Church were to describe their way to Rome, it would probably appear that no two have followed exactly the same path. We who have accepted the Church's claim to be "the pillar and ground of Truth" do not wonder that there are as many roads to it as there are minds.

When men so stubbornly hold fast to the hope that it will be impossible for mankind to find Absolute Truth, it is because they imagine that life would lose all its enchantment and there would be an end to our freedom, if a truth should really exist — a single truth, in which all the rest must be comprehended. If the rest cannot enter as parts of this truth, their falsity would be evident. At times, most of us have felt it intolerable that two times two must always be four. Yet it is on the acceptance of this tiresome dogma that the possibility of developing a great part of one's individual talents and accomplishments must rest. If a man retains his freedom to act and reckon on his personal conviction that two times two are five or nothing or seven, he must take the consequences. Among these are the reprisals of his fellow men when they regard it counter to their interests to settle accounts with him on the basis of such a subjective multiplication table.

Similarly, we all have experienced, at least as a passing mood, that longing for a dreamland where two times two are as much as we desire them to be at the moment.

*Irma di Lena*

all precepts of the Church and have found great consolation in prayer, especially when I know that my husband, in his many travels by land and sea, is exposed to manifold dangers. My husband gives me a good example in many ways. Before every trip we pray together and before every sea voyage we have a Mass said for a safe journey. Even now, when for the sake of my children I no longer am able to accompany my husband, I feel certain that his religious fervor will help him to remain faithful to me and I in return resolve anew to live up to our faith till the end of my days.



To be sure, the freedom of any dreamland is rather an illusion, for in reality the number of dream types and dream combinations is limited. Dream life is governed by laws in a higher degree than most people imagine. But what we do not know does not hurt us and so we imagine that it must imply a glorious freedom to transfer ourselves into a world whose system and quality we ourselves decide. But such is not the case in the reality into which we have been born, where the essential nature and property of things are fixed and bound by laws.

There is but one possible way for mankind, as we know it, to be free. Man must pick his way through a whole network of causes and concatenations, and his attempt often ends in an embarrassing entanglement which catches and holds him fast. In this world we can attain to only one kind of freedom, that to which our Lord refers when He says: "The Truth shall make you free." But even after a man has recognized the truth and by it is freed, so that the determining factors in life no longer hold him in chains, he cannot keep this freedom at a cheaper price than by an uninterrupted fight against the powers from which he has escaped, first and foremost, against the temptation to look back with longing eyes toward his old romantic dreamland, where two and two would be anything he wished, and where he himself could decide as to what that was to be.

It is intelligible enough in a way — this ingenuity of modern man to wrest himself free of the authority of the Church. We witness it in the continual efforts made by him to escape from whatever may hold any claim to authority. These efforts to avoid bondage and this fight against a Church which always has openly demanded the recognition of its authority is furthermore not peculiar to modern man. The same tendency exercised a great power even over the Jews in Jerusalem in the days before the Pasch, in the year of our Lord's crucifixion.

## *Beyond Human Limitations*

Perhaps few converts, however, are able to explain their conversion; to tell how their opposition to One who called Himself the Way, the Truth, and the Life was overcome — an opposition dictated by fear and distrust. This necessarily calls for the aid of that mystical and supernatural power which theologians call "grace." We can tell no more than our daily experiences, until a day came when we realized the injustice of our opposition. Man has a fundamental distrust of all authority which is purely of the earth, yet our human nature suffers from an incurable desire for some authority. We want teachers who can actually teach us, we want leaders who can give us orders and prohibitions, we want someone set over us on whom we can depend, and whom we can admire — yes, whom we can love. Even in my youth, it did not require an extremely sharp intelligence to discover this fact, although the world's hunger for authority had not then taken the pathological form it has since assumed. So the question arises, do we long for authority because we are in reality created to bow before an Authority such as has the only legitimate right over us — a Creator's right? The right of an *Auctor Vitae*?

"Think for yourself" was constantly said to the children in the school I attended. But when I followed this injunction as well as I could and my thinking resulted in something other than that which the teachers had intended me to think, I soon remarked that they became unpleasantly astonished. They saw nothing in my disagreement with them except a desire for opposition, naughtiness, or else that I had allowed myself to be influenced by the people who were stupid, ignorant, or untruthful, because they did not believe and think as did my teachers. The school principal was one of the first exponents of Woman's Rights in our country, and the spirit of the school was pronouncedly "Left" since the close of the last century. "Freedom, Progress,



Enlightenment" was its motto — Wergeland and Björnson were its patron saints. I had and have great sympathy for many people who found in this tendency a goal for their idealism; a wish to serve their country, their sex, a certain class, or humanity as a whole. I had discovered, however, long before growing up, that people who called themselves liberal minded or radical, or in step with a new era, are most often extremely bigoted. To be bigoted does not consist in a man being convinced that his belief is right and another's belief is wrong, but in his having too little intelligence and imagination to be able to perceive that those who disagree with him can do so in good faith and complete honesty.

Certainly there was a great deal of bigotry in conservative circles at that time. In my younger days, the conservative was to me like a person of a foreign race. Those I met later, for instance during my office years, did not awaken any real desire on my part to know them better. I have the impression that they were easygoing souls and less bigoted.

The first to give me a rather comprehensive picture of the conservative viewpoint of life at that time was, by the way, the minister who confirmed me, and he made it intensely repulsive to me. I received the impression that, in this congregation at all events, God required (of the girls at least) nothing more than essentially negative virtues that might prove serviceable. I was especially annoyed when he went through the Sixth Commandment with us. He addressed his remarks to the girls from the Public School. He advised them against accepting "treats," warned them against men who might flirt with them on their free afternoons, and told a touching story of a young girl he visited in a hospital, where she lay ruined because of "a single kiss." I was shocked and thought: Really, the girl did not do anything so very sinful. On the contrary, it was the man's fault.

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I knew quite well that ladies in our circle were often guilty of things much more immoral than the misstep made by this poor servant girl. There came to mind the breaking of marriage vows, the running after men considered good parties whether or not they were unscrupulous in business and evil-minded. That virginity could have a positive value, could be a reservoir of strength, and not merely a negotiable asset in the marriage market, a minister of that intellectual milieu could hardly be expected to point out to us. It was considered something of a misfortune and something of a joke if a woman became an old maid. I had read what Luther wrote about virginity and it made me very anti-Lutheran. There were some things I had learned by attending Ragna Nielsen's school!

Yet I did not doubt at the time that the minister spoke to us in good faith, and that he was ready to suffer and make sacrifices for his unpleasant idea of God. On the other hand I was not minded to take his version of Christianity as more authentic than any of the others on which I had relied. His instruction for confirmation had made clear to me that I did not believe in the religion with which in my childhood and younger days I had fancied that I had some distant and vague connection. It was unfortunate that in the Protestantism I had learned to know, nearly every person who was religiously inclined had also his own personal conviction or his own independent conception of Christianity.

The God presented to us by our school instructors in religion was more acceptable than the Uranienborg God. He was human — genuinely human — but not more human than the noblest humanity I was able to imagine. He was wise, but not wise beyond human understanding. Like many other young persons brought up in a free-thought milieu, I had the impression that one's faith is a private matter, if not purely a matter of taste. I too





*Sigrid Muesel.*

had my own belief, although I really saw no necessity for any God at all if the sole purpose of His existence was to agree with my ideas of right and wrong, of honor and dishonor and to approve my ideals and my condemnations. Since these, I concluded, must be conformable to my nature and my upbringing, I felt that I should uphold them without constructing a God who should agree with me.

A God who as the exact Opposite (*den Absolutt Andre*), and at the same time One who could communicate with me, whose ways were not my ways, whose will — absolute and distinct — could be distinguished from my will, but who could lead me, at the same time, into His ways and attune my will to harmony with His will — that Being I was not yet bold enough to picture.

Those who talked to us in the name of Christianity had but used the divine name in order to justify their own processes of thought and their ideals. A great many of them had given up historic Christianity as something untenable, even though — owing to a purely sentimental attitude of mind — they could not forsake a viewpoint of life colored by Christianity. They had given up belief in Jesus Christ as God and Man, but continued to adore Jesus, the Son of the carpenter, as an ideal man, a human ideal. Dogma, truth, revealed from “beyond” and formulated in human language, they could not believe, but they did believe in religious intuition and religious genius in mankind.

I had absolutely no inclination toward the worship of Man, nor could I believe in another person's intuition, certainly not in One who said of Himself: “Learn of Me, for I am meek and humble of heart,” yet who at the same time used language against His opponents which, to put it mildly, was arrogant — unless He who acted thus was more than a mere human genius. I started from



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the point (which I considered as proved without examining the evidence) that the historic Jesus was a religious genius whose intuition had led humanity's God-Idea many steps forward on the road of development. For all of us "development" was synonymous with "improvement," if we gave that matter any thought at all. I did not see of what interest it could possibly be to me that a young Jew, nineteen hundred years ago, had gone about assuring people that their sins were forgiven them, particularly when He said of Himself: "Which of you shall convict Me of sin?" He could not, therefore, have known from personal experience, how it feels to have done something against another which one would wish for all the world not to have done, nor what an agony it is to have disappointed one's own best intentions so badly that forgiveness of self seems almost impossible. I knew what it was to regret cruelty toward others, secret cowardice, indolence where indolence was unpardonable. Life, I may say, in accordance with my humanistic, private religion, had not resulted in a pleasant satisfaction with myself, unless — and that would have been most pitiful of all — I should have stooped to compare myself with others who apparently lived according to easier standards. I knew very well that my knowledge of their inner lives was too meager for me to judge them rightly, nor had they, so far as I could tell, paid any homage to my own moral ideas.

*Si non est Deus, non est bonus.* I did not know at that time that there were others who had said this long ago, but I was familiar with enough history to know that historic Christianity had preached a Jesus who could forgive all sins to all men, because He is God and Creator, and all our sins against ourselves or others are first and foremost sins against Him. He can forgive the sins because all power is given Him in heaven and on earth, even the power to transform our transgressions against

others into something good. That was the Christ whom St. Olav preached to the men who came and offered to believe in the King's own captivating personality. "If you have faith in me, you shall have faith in what I teach you, you shall believe that Jesus Christ has created the heavens and the earth and all men."

Nevertheless, it was Renan's *Life of Jesus*, and a number of similar attempts to reduce Christ to a purely "historic Jesus," which first led me to comprehend how unbelievable it was that a man, with the slightest resemblance to any of these phantoms, could have inspired the friends who survived Him to anything as loyal as the Apostolic adventures in life and death.

Yet I was far then from believing that Christ was really God, revealed to a human world, and that the Church was the organism in which He remained to continue the work of salvation which He had finished on the Cross, coincident with the new generation. But, what I had apprehended before to a certain extent, and what I now saw more clearly, was the fact that the new religious systems, built upon either a godless basis or on humanity plus some kind of deism, were not in the least more scientifically established than the old religions. On the contrary, they were even to a greater degree built upon hypotheses and a matter of taste. Many of the accusations which I had uncritically allowed to enter into one ear, but unfortunately had not allowed to pass out of the other, were in reality loose accusations or speculations prompted by time or place. For example, I cannot say how many times I had heard that God was merely the wishful desire of the human heart, and that belief in existence after death, particularly, was dictated by an unseemly greediness for a portion of life longer than that which Nature found it suitable to allot to each of us. I now realized that the first accusation was like a knife which cuts both ways. It was difficult to believe



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that most of the freethinkers of my acquaintance actually desired a God who would let them propose while He disposed. Quite the contrary, most of them suffered from Theophobia! I knew that was very often my own case. So, too, I knew that people believed in a life after death, but seldom as a pleasant form of existence — their thoughts were of Hell or Hades. They had accepted belief in this as an inescapable fact. I myself could not imagine any form of eternal life which would not be appalling in length. All the things of this world, in the final analysis, draw their charm from the knowledge that we shall not enjoy them very long. The miracle of the seasons pierces us to the very marrow of our bones because we know that sooner or later will come a spring we shall not see, a year when the first snow will fall on a mound under which we lie. And even those we love best — would it be possible to love them so much were it not for the certainty that death will take us from them if life has not already done so?

It was the old story — I had rejected the beliefs and unbeliefs of others because they were ridiculously full of their own idiosyncrasies, but I now realized that my own point of view displayed the same weakness. Surely, I could continue to believe in "my own power and strength," knowing well how little I had to depend on. Others, in the days of old, had managed to go through life with an equally scant belief, but they made no claim that it was for them anything more than a blade with which they could hew their way through a brief existence here. At all events, they had not been sentimental about it, nor had they grown eloquent about any brotherhood in play or love of conflict.

For my part, I could not rid myself of a feeling that one who isolates himself thus is a traitor, though I could not see precisely what the treachery was nor to whom I was a traitor. I believed in a brotherhood among men,

although I could not possibly say that I believed in man's perfectibility. I simply believed in man's stupidity and intelligence, in his goodness and wickedness, his courage and weakness, and in the unstable nature of the individual. Among those whom I had met, I trusted some few rather than the many. Nevertheless, I felt that if it was true, as a Salvation Army lassie remarked in my childhood home, that God loves sinners — "The greater sinner a person is, the more God loves him" — so, too, from a human point of view, must He love best those perfect men who always stand in danger of sinning, in their minds or in their thoughts, and that in a worse way than the ordinary run of rogues and harlots could dream of.

The thought that all human powers and gifts which fit an individual to be a teacher, a leader, and pioneer in the world, must make him a conscious or unconscious wrongdoer against his followers unless he knows himself bound by a personal responsibility to someone who stands over all men and who, as it were, holds humanity in His hand — this it was that explained Christianity to me in a way that at any rate had consistency, probability, and reasonableness about it beyond any other attempt at solving the riddle of life. Humanity's fellowship consists in our being all coheirs in a bankrupt estate after the fall of man. A common loss of the ability on which we might rely to overcome the vanishing point of our virtues and our knowledge, I argued, makes it impossible for any man to lead his fellow men on other than a wrong track. Only a supernatural intervention can save us from ourselves. The Christian Church teaches that Christ was Himself this intervention. God, who by permitting Himself to be born of a woman, had united Himself with our nature, and by allowing Himself to be crucified to redeem us from sin, had prepared the way to an eternal life for us. Not the existence in Hell or Hades which man always has looked forward to with



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unwilling fear was to be our destiny, but a life in and with God, the Eternal Blessedness which we are not able to conceive. But even in living our life here on earth we can experience so close a contact with the divine that we know life can be happy, even though eternal, since in God we can unceasingly renew our life's strength from that power to which is due all life in the world.

At last I had progressed to the point of seeing that I had no belief in God at all. But I believed still less in my own unbelief. The signs which force us against our will to accept Christianity as one accepts, for instance, a demonstration of relationship in botany (even if here the "scientifically proved" facts are not nearly as many as the teachers in school believed), were out of question. Otherwise how could Christ say: "He who believes and is baptized shall be saved, but he that believeth not shall be condemned"? This certainly does not preclude a man from using his reason, but in the last instance it is his will which chooses. It is for him to decide whether he will isolate himself in the hell of his own egotism, or give himself wholly to God and be freed of the limitations of self-love to go on to eternal possibilities.

There was nothing else for me to do than to go to a priest and ask to be instructed in all that the Catholic Church really teaches. That the Catholic Church was identical with the Church founded by Christ I had never doubted. For me the question of the Church's authority was entirely a question of Christ's authority. I never had understood the history of the Reformation as other than a history of rebellion against Christianity, even though it was a rebellion of believing Christians — often subjectively pious — who hoped that true Christianity was something which harmonized better with their subjective Christian ideals than the actuality, such as the impression of its phenomena must be in a world where the good fare ill in unholy human hands.

The usual objections against Catholicism which I had heard in the past failed to make any great impression on me. Naturally, however, I had received a rather vague idea that there must be some truth in these censures in view of the widespread prevalence of the stories. Besides, there are in particular two facts that induce men to believe them. The first is our disinclination to give up our own favorite fancies of which we fear a teaching Church will deprive us. The other is the scandal caused by bad Catholics in every age. This last is the dark reverse side of the luminous doctrine of the Communion of Saints.

I think it should be easier for people of our day to understand what is meant by the doctrine of the merits of the saints, which implies a treasury of riches from which the whole Church may benefit, for in our own time not only Catholics but Christians of all sects and shades suffer for the guilt of each single one of us before God and his neighbor. No human unity is as absolute as the unity between the living cells in the Mystical Body of Christ.

The homage paid to the saints, fostered by the Church from the beginning, really seems to answer an ineradicable need of our nature. We must worship heroes! In lieu of better, we have made heroes of match kings and gangsters, sportsmen and artists, film stars and dictators. We must set someone on a pedestal so that we may admire something of ourselves in him. In the saints is realized the object God had in creating us—to quote the words of the Offertory: “who didst wonderfully create and dignify the human race, and hast still more wonderfully reformed it.” Only in the saints can we find an outlet for our hero worship, without at the same time worshipping something of our own nature which it is cowardly or degrading to worship.

The cult of Mary? I always have looked upon this as



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a matter of course. If we believe that God has saved us by taking upon Himself our flesh and blood, then surely we must look upon Mary, she in whose womb He formed His body, with feelings unlike those we have for any other purely human being — feelings of a profound respect, a deep devotion, a true sympathy with the unspeakable trials of her life on earth, and joy in her incomprehensible rank in the Kingdom of God. For if it be true that Mary's Son is both true God and true man, then is the Son her son, and the Mother His mother, for all eternity, yet He is the Creator and she His creature. That the word *worship* means two different things when we talk of worshiping our Creator and of worshiping the woman who was made by Him in beauty as a flower of His created earth, no Catholic fails to understand.

Restraint of conscience or liberty of conscience? But the very people who praised liberty of conscience the highest were the ones, I thought, who could have benefited exceedingly if their consciences had been guided by a strong hand. As for instance, when they took liberties with the good name and reputation of their neighbor, something which even in my most pagan days, my conscience would never have allowed to me. I did not know whether this was due to my conscience alone or to my conscience as my parents had developed it. They were accustomed to say that one person knows so little about another, that the only thing we can safely say on hearing a story about another is that it probably is not true. People who indulge in gossip must always be a trifle feeble-minded, and when they spread slander it is only an outlet for the filth which often afflicts the weak-minded. But I never have cared to assert that they acted against better knowledge or against their conscience. On the whole, what has man not done to man? And what right have I to assume that others acted against

their conscience? When I have so little trust in the conscience of other people to keep their conversation always clean, shall I presume to believe that my own conscience does not require guidance from without?

Because I believe that Jesus Christ is God Himself, my Maker, I therefore believe also that He has built His Church as man needs it. What God has given me through His Church is difficult to put into words. His very lips have told us that He bestows on us His peace, but His peace is not that which the world gives. It is a different peace. It may, perhaps, be likened to the peace that reigns far down in the depths of the great sea. Good weather or bad across its surface cannot affect it, nor the struggle of strange monsters in its depths that devour each other. Our practical experience is that God's Kingdom is within us, although we find ourselves encircled by our own uneasy self, half concerned with realities, half with the world's illusions. But we experience that in a supernatural manner God is in us and unceasingly upholds His Kingdom within us against our own assaults upon it.



## IT DIDN'T RIME

PASTOR HAAKON BERGWITZ

TWO recent incidents are the reason for my giving this short account of why I became a Catholic, and why I am today as convinced a Catholic as when I took the step and entered the ancient Catholic Church, more than ten years ago.

The first incident directly concerns myself.

All of my family and the majority of my friends and acquaintances were and are Protestants. For not a few of them — at least this is my impression — it has been something of a problem that I should venture to go over to the Catholic Church. A greater problem, perhaps, than my change of faith, has been my choice of the priesthood in that Church. My position has been respected, but to them it is incomprehensible that anyone in our modern age could turn back to what, according to them, is such a thing of the past as Catholic Christianity. Some ask: "Can he be wholly honest and sincere in this religion, or must he not for the most part, as a measure of obedience, bow to the Catholic control of intelligence, and so proclaim and preach things which, were he on free foot and not in the position he holds under the powerful authority of the Church, he would not proclaim and preach?"

I know this theory has been set forth recently by one whom I esteem. To give an answer to this person and to all others who may share his opinion of converts, is the principal reason for this account.

The second incident does not concern myself directly,

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but it also has close connection with my work as a priest.

Recently a person who had been closely connected with the Lutheran congregation of our town was received into the Church. On that occasion one of his acquaintances, who had been present at the ceremony, remarked: "How could you make such a profession of faith? You bind yourself hand and foot by it and can never again find yourself free. We Lutheran Christians have real freedom to believe what we will . . ."

This remark also requires an answer, an explanation of why Lutheran Christians sometimes accept the Catholic belief and willingly give their promise to be faithful to it as long as life lasts and God gives them the grace.

To begin with, I shall call to mind some passages from Holy Scripture. In the Gospel of St. John, chapter eighteen, we read the words of Jesus Christ as He stands before Pilate:

"For this was I born, and for this came I into the World; that I should give testimony to the truth. Everyone that is of the truth, heareth My voice."

Then Pilate, the worldly wise, self-conscious, egotistical skeptic, turns toward Him and says:

"What is the truth?" What do we know of the truth? I do not believe in You.

But for Christ, the truth has meaning.

"I am the Way, the Truth and the Life" are His words in chapter fourteen of the same gospel. Then again He says: "You shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."

As a child I did not grow up in a religious atmosphere. In spite of the fact that upon my mother's side I belong to an old Lutheran clerical family and can point to a number of more or less prominent clerics in my family, yet my home never was a religious one. It was rather the opposite — much the same as most of the west-side homes were at that time.



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Besides this, the Christianity I met with was invariably colored by subjectivity and accentuated by emotion. It was mostly kind, such as that of the elderly ladies who went in for Christianity. I assumed that they required it as a sort of personal comfort. In any case, it did not interest me, nor did I see any particular interest in it on the part of my own companions. As is usual and fitting, I was confirmed. I could not be different from the rest. Besides, confirmation would bring with it a number of nice presents. But the instruction for confirmation passed right over me. I do not mean by this to blame the minister who instructed me. I simply cannot remember what he said or did not say. I remember him only as a very friendly, well-cared-for and musically gifted man. But that Christ should be a reality and a truth in our life, in my own individual life today and every day, that, above all, never occurred to me then. All was good and fine, but entirely a matter of sentiment.

Nor was it religious interest that first brought me in contact with the Catholic Church. What happened was only one of the many incidents which I have since learned to know as constituting the Lord's providence. Neither was it any "Catholic propaganda" which decided the matter. It was occasioned, strange as that may sound, by the newspaper *Dagbladet* and by Dr. Kr. Schjelderup.

In the autumn of 1924, while still a postwar prosperity and so-called "good times" reigned in our country, and the materialistic viewpoint of life spread as never before, there was published a typical product of the time, first as a series of articles and later in book form. The volume was entitled: "Who Was Christ and What Did the Church Make of Him?" The author was Dr. Kr. Schjelderup.

These articles were extremely engrossing. I always took great interest in history, and for that reason I read them with close attention. Furthermore, I now became inter-

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ested in Christ, both the Christ of religion and the Christ of history, the two personalities which Dr. Schjelderup wished to separate. Christianity suddenly stood before me as a historic problem.

It was not my subjective adjustment that motivated my interest. It was not my consciousness of sin, my emotional urge to seek a redeemer. My consciousness of sin did not exist. Christ to me was simply a historic problem, a remarkable phenomenon in the history of the world.

Dr. Schjelderup pictured Christ as a man, a religious personality of admittedly immeasurable proportions, but at the same time just a human being. Only after His death had the Church made Him what He has become in the Christian consciousness of the modern world: the incarnate Son of God — true God but also true man. Hear then what Dr. Schjelderup says as a résumé of his whole position:

“The doctrine of the Church is not the same as the religion of Christ. The Christ of the Church is not the Jesus of history. The dogmas of the Church have but little connection with Jesus and His teachings. Admitting that dogmas in their time partly originated as expressions of individual religious experiences on the part of holy Christian men, yet that is too much. But in making the Christian belief in God as the Father dependent on submission to them, the Church system represents not only a departure from but also a direct opposition to Jesus’ own religion.

“Orthodoxy even claims that its system is built upon revelations found in the Scriptures. We now know that this is wholly incorrect. Historic research into dogma shows that its formulation has been essentially the result of a number of concepts determined by contemporary thought. As before stated these were adopted by a majority vote in church councils which imputed more to the Scriptures than could be found therein.



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"If the composition of church councils occasionally had happened to be different, certainly one or more of our Church dogmas would have been different. All would have been equally orthodox, and looked upon by the Church as having equal Scriptural authority as the ones we now have" (p. 102).

It was this strong challenge to official Christianity which awoke my lively interest. I had heard of the liberal form of Christianity in opposition to the orthodox. In my reflections I had formed the opinion that, as nearly as I could discover, the orthodox were some extremely serious men who would not stand any nonsense — we should stick to what we found printed in our Norwegian Bible, and not diverge from it in the least. The liberals, on the other hand, were just what the word implied, liberal, pliable, easygoing and likable men, who allowed each of us to follow whatever he preferred, to have his own little private religion in which he did not quite nor wholly shut out the Lord. Schjelderup pushed the matter to extremes. The other liberals hurried to take issue with him, their viewpoint was less extreme. The orthodox were offended. The result was the nonappointment of Dr. Schjelderup when he later sought office in the Norwegian Church.

But the question raised by Dr. Schjelderup interested me intensely. First it had revealed to me a fundamental weakness in the official Christianity of our country of which I had not been aware; and as said before, the person of Christ began to occupy my thoughts.

It seemed to me hardly probable that the matter could be as simple as Dr. Schjelderup portrayed it, but nevertheless I had to admit that he had both the logical and historical arguments in better order than his opponents, especially the orthodox, who made belief in Christ dependent upon pure feeling — a personal experience, as they called it — in conjunction with reading of the Bible.

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But if I had to admit that Dr. Schjelderup had the best arguments on his side, in comparison with the view of the others, I still felt it was hardly likely that Christ, with the part He played in human history, could be but an ordinary human being. He had made an impression on men and peoples in quite a different way and in a much higher degree than any other person in history. In reality, it is upon Him and upon His teachings that the whole structure of our laws and morals rests, while our reckoning of time is based upon His birth. Was it then believable that He was but an ordinary mortal?

Together with this thought came other reflections.

I believed in God, in One who is the Cause of all and who guides the whole universe. I could not avoid seeing the evidence of that all around me and in me. Yes, I myself also was but the effect caused by someone else, by another. I had existence bestowed on me. But I perceived that there could be a Being who is His own existence, who is eternal and unlimited, without beginning, without end. A Being like the Spirit who talked to Moses from the burning bush: "I am who am!"

I reflected a great deal on our human nature.

I have always had an eye open for what I may call objective truth. I have met many people in my life, and I have encountered about as many opinions. "I think this," "I think that," is the steady chorus. This expression usually covers only a personal, subjective appraisal of the subject in question. By this, men admit, indirectly, their own limitations, or in other words they say: I think thus, but what in itself, objectively seen, is the truth, I am not certain about. This understanding satisfies my own subjectivity.

Such a subjective valuation of things, however, could not satisfy me. I would know what was true, the full, objective truth, and this urge in myself I thought to find again in our common human nature.



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We human beings are endowed with reason. It is this which distinguishes us from animals. They do not think nor do they reason. Animals use only their natural instincts. We think.

What is the meaning of — to think? The simple answer is: to seek the truth. We analyze every single little thought which arises in our minds. We want to see what it is about and to attain clarity as to the thought occupying our minds at the moment. So it is with all. Man seeks, most often quite unconsciously, but also consciously, always a truth, even *the* Truth.

When I compare this eternal search for the truth by human minds with my belief in God's existence, a third question arises: What truth is it that man in the final analysis seeks? The answer must of necessity be: the eternal Truth, the truth of God Himself and His meaning in our life. As this occurred to me, the problem of Christ appeared clear. He called Himself: the Way, the Truth, and the Life. Was He then really the Son of God, the Way to the Truth, the eternal Truth? Was He the One God who gave mankind the absolute Truth of Himself and the life to come?

There was still a great deal which remained inexplicable to me.

It was at this time that I came in contact with the Catholic Church. And it was here that I found enlightenment on all the problems given to me by Dr. Schjelderup's book.

This also was purely accidental. It so happened that an acquaintance of mine had become a Catholic a short time previously. He talked very highly of the priest, a Norwegian convert, who had prepared him. I inquired if I could talk to this priest, and as there was no reason why I could not, I had a long conversation with him. The result was that we arranged I should take instructions twice a week, and wholly free.

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I shall never forget this period, for it was a fruitful time for me. What we studied was nothing so very remarkable. It was simply to go through the catechism, the Catholic catechism, and hand in hand with that was another reading of the Bible, interpretation and explanation, together with Church history and other apologetic literature. But into what a new world I entered! Little by little the whole Catholic interpretation of Christian belief, the old, original Church's view of the problems which occupied my mind, was spread before me. I was completely satisfied with the Church's answers to my problems. I began to see the coherence of the whole, the logical, clear connection between Christ and the Church. I understood that Christ was the Son of God and that He had a right to rule over me, to lay claim to me.

First and foremost, it became clear to me that Dr. Schjelderup undoubtedly was right in his criticism of the orthodox Christianity we know here in this country. It stood logically and historically upon very weak foundations. It was true, as Dr. Schjelderup said, that the principle, "The Bible alone," which guides in Christian questions of belief, was untenable. It was true that much of that which Orthodoxy really held to be revealed truth was obtained by decision of a majority in a church council, the Catholic Church councils, held long before the Protestant church existed. Besides, even the Bible — from whom did it derive its authority? This also rested on a majority vote of a Church council. It was adopted by a Church council at the close of the fourth century by collecting Christian writings, gospels, and epistles which this Church council decided should be the recognized source of our Christian belief. A number of similar writings were rejected. Only the writings we now know as the Bible (the New Testament) were approved. These were collected into a book and the Church council declared: Here is the written Word of God.



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To me this seemed remarkable. All Christians believe that the Bible is the written Word of God, but no one, neither the liberal nor the orthodox, wishes to know anything about these Church councils which had such influence upon Christianity down through the ages. Yes, which had given them even the Bible itself. Dr. Schjelderup was clear enough. He believed neither in the Church councils nor in the Church. But by this, he also fairly and honestly rejected belief in Christianity itself. To him, the person of Jesus was that of an honest, outstanding man, of whom he had a high opinion. That was the gist of his belief. His viewpoint was understandable, but I could not understand the position of the others.

But Dr. Schjelderup's position was not satisfactory enough either. The importance of Christianity in the history of the world found no explanation in his point of view. For this Christ had played too great a role in the human consciousness. Besides I must assume that clever and clear-sighted men had lived in the world before Dr. Schjelderup. The real explanation came to me in my hours of instruction with the Catholic priest. I learnt that the Church councils had great importance in the practical building, and formulation of Christianity. It was, namely, the duty of the Church to speak in the name of Christ to mankind, to all those who would live on this earth after He had gone away. But it was not any new truths which the Church and the Church councils gave us. On the contrary, they penetrated but deeper into the original teachings of Christ and clarified them. The Church was then and is still the mouthpiece of Christ Himself. It was the Church which carried on the work of the Apostles down through the ages. It was to the Apostles that Christ said: "All power is given to Me in Heaven and in earth. Going therefore, teach ye all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Teaching them to observe

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all things whatsoever I have commanded you; and behold I am with you all days even to the consummation of the world."

The Apostles, and since they could not live forever, those who were chosen after them, received the injunction to instruct the people of all nations in all that Christ had taught them of eternal truth. Thus Christ founded the Church. It was to be a society of believing people where many should hear the preaching, but where some were chosen to instruct the others. Christ promised to give these teachers the assistance of the Holy Ghost, and to be with them until the consummation of the world.

Christ had founded a Church. There was no doubt in my soul about that. He would have a voice which should speak in His name and continue His teaching down through the ages to all mankind. He did not say to the Apostles: Sit down and write the Gospels and the Epistles. No, He only said: Go out and teach, instruct. Teach all nations that I have taught you — all!

I had to admit that here the Catholic Church was right. It had, like Dr. Schjelderup, the historical and logical arguments on its side. If, therefore, Christ had founded a Church, there could be but one Church, a universal (Catholic or universal) church. It was historically certain that no church other than the Catholic could trace its existence back to the time of Christ Himself and His Apostles. The Northern Lutheran State Church, like the other church communions, was founded in later times, not as Christ's own but as a man-made institution.

Yet the greatest problem still confronted me. While Dr. Schjelderup was a liberal, the Church, the Catholic Church, was orthodox, arch-orthodox. As a religious skeptic once said to me long before I thought of becoming a Catholic: "The Catholic Church at all events is consistent. It adheres to all the old dogmas."

I saw that the Church, viewed historically, was founded



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by Christ. The burning question became, therefore: Was Christ God? Or was He but a man? If He was God I comprehended that the Church which He founded must be infallible and truthful. If, on the contrary, He was a man only, then I was freed from all obligations to Christianity. I could form my own religion or not, just as I saw fit.

Here also I wished to come to a clear understanding, to the objective truth. I understood that faith in Christ as God could not be simply a matter of feeling. It is not an "inner experience" or the moral claims in the Bible which tell us that Christ is the Son of God. No matter how much we are attracted by the Biblical portrayal of the life of Christ, no matter how closely we feel in our souls a mystical connection with Christ, this is not sufficient to make us recognize Him as the One, Exalted, only-begotten Son of God. The Mohammedans, Buddhists, Brahmins, and others can have similar experiences in which their God can play the same role, and the writings in their sacred books are also very beautiful. No, belief in Christ as the Son of God cannot be an individual matter of feeling, it must rest upon an objective historical fact.

It would take too long for me to give an account of the historical arguments I found. The Bible itself, the Gospels, are undoubtedly the most dependable written sources, but also profane historical writings agreed with the Gospels in such degree that I found thoroughly satisfactory proof that Christ really was, must be, that which He said of Himself, the Son of God.

I do not believe that the resurrection of Christ can be a historical forgery. I also believe that His miracles, such as described in the Gospels, certainly took place. Christ appeared to His disciples as a sign of the truth of His words. I am convinced that the Apostles, these common, ordinary, and very human men, never could

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have done the work they did, if the certainty that Christ was the Son of God had not supported them in all their trials. Nor can I believe that the great army of martyrs we read of in the first century of Christianity, could so willingly have gone to their death for the sake of their convictions, if they had not had the most authentic proof that Christ was true God and had spoken the words of truth to them.

No, truly, I must acknowledge that it happened at that time. The Word was made flesh and lived amongst us. God had become man and had talked to us through His only-begotten Son.

I was now through with my instruction hours with the Catholic priest. All was clear to me. Christ was the Son of God. He had founded a Church and made its teaching identical with His own. This Church was the One, United, Universal — Catholic Church.

You would now imagine that I immediately became an enthusiastic, zealous Catholic. This was not the case.

I did not become a Catholic suddenly. On the contrary, it took some time. Why? Well, when I had concluded my historical and logical studies, it began to dawn on me that, in truth, all this signified demands on me, involved highly unpleasant consequences for myself.

For instance, the Church always has made absolute demands. For the Church absolute honesty, absolute purity, absolute unselfishness, absolute love, are not any new precepts. She requires this! Furthermore she requires that I shall confess my sins to the person who has authority from Christ to hear confessions. She requires that I should change my habits, should pray, should fulfill certain religious duties; in short, that I should make the Sermon on the Mount the absolute norm for my life. I had not reckoned with this.

Half a year went by while I pondered about it. I tried



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to see if I could not explain away God. But it did not work. I said to myself that it was much simpler and easier to be a Protestant. But that did not work either. As a Catholic acquaintance said to me: "In a way it is much easier to be a Protestant, for a Protestant knows much less of the truth than you now do. For this reason he will be responsible for less. But you never again can be a Protestant." In that he was right — I must take the step.

I perceived that it was God's call and God's will, and with full and complete conviction alone, I made the Catholic confession of faith and was received into the Church.

This is the answer to the two questions I presented at the beginning of this account. I never for a moment doubted that it was the right thing to do, and I never have found it necessary to go against my convictions in the slightest detail, as a Catholic Christian and a Catholic priest. The truth I learned always has been and always will be wholly satisfying to me. Of this I have no doubt.

Why I am Catholic is evident from all that I have said.

In the Catholic Church I can have a silent hour every day, make a meditation, and attend the Holy Mass. I believe the Holy Ghost speaks to me and in me. Here is where I must be on guard, for the Holy Ghost does not say one thing to me and something else through His Church.

In the Catholic Church I can confess my sins, share them with another. I can give expression to all that I desire and talk out freely to all I wish. But in the confessional I have a true source of renewal of soul and strength. There shall the servant of God hear my confession and in the name of Christ give me absolution for my sins.

To conclude: In the Holy Communion, in the Blessed Sacrament of the altar, I have the certainty that Christ

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Himself is present and comes to me, unites Himself with me in the most intimate way and gives me the power and strength I so greatly need.

For this reason, I am a Catholic, and will be one as long as I live.



## BOCCACCIO MAKES A CONVERT

NILS E. SANTESSON

IT IS not easy for a Protestant who was born and reared in a Protestant country such as Sweden to determine exactly how he came to the understanding of the truth of the Catholic Church. Even after accepting the Catholic religion as the only true Christian religion, it is quite a difficult task to join the Catholic communion. One reason is, that the Catholic Church, which has comparatively few members in Sweden, makes a poor showing in comparison to the Swedish Lutheran Church. To relinquish one for the other is, therefore, not exactly commendatory as far as public opinion is concerned.

Though we were blessed abundantly with material goods, our family life was far from being ideal and gradually led to the divorce of my parents. Consequently, my mother suffered from melancholy and then began to practise the somber piety which seems to be an heirloom of the Protestant sects of our country. With the help of a tutor we children learned to read and write at a much earlier age than other children. Since I was permitted to read whatsoever I wished, I frequently got hold of books which were beyond my comprehension. As other boys, I also had my favorite authors, such as Frederick Marryat, Fenimore Cooper, Jules Verne, Daniel Defoe, etc.; however, I read Eugène Sue, Émile Zola, Boccaccio, and other similar popular writers likewise at a tender age, not knowing that their books were unwholesome even for adults. At the age of fourteen I had already read

the *Decameron*, and though it may seem paradoxical, the reading of this book induced me to study the teachings of Catholicism. The lascivious stories of Boccaccio have escaped my memory and as I grew older I never indulged in such reading again. Life is too short to pass it with such a frivolous occupation. A few pages of such lewd literature as a rule suffice to show up the contents of the whole book. Luckily I was not contaminated and was much like other boys: carefree, healthy, and playful.

The above-mentioned story of Boccaccio runs about as follows: Once upon a time there were two friends living in Paris; one of them an orthodox Jew, the other a pious Christian. The Christian was inconsolable at the thought that his Jewish friend should be eternally lost if he died as an unbeliever. He therefore pleaded with him to take instructions and become a Christian, but the Jew resisted all entreaties for a long time. Finally he promised to go to Rome, the center of Christendom, in order to study Christianity at its very best. However, the Christian had his misgivings about leaving the Jew visit Rome since he knew what a scandalous life the Pope and many Cardinals were leading at the time of the Renaissance. He therefore tried to induce the Jew by various means to remain in Paris and take instruction there, but all arguments fell flat. The Jew insisted that his conversion should take place in Rome or not at all. Naturally, the Christian became sad and gave up all hopes for the conversion of his friend. However, after some time the Jew returned from Rome, embraced his friend and to the astonishment of the Christian proclaimed himself a full-fledged Catholic. The Christian was at first speechless. Then he inquired how it had come about, and the Jew answered: "Well, when I came to Rome and saw the offensive lives of the clergy, I said to myself: This religion must be from God, for if it had been of human origin it would have perished long ago."



## *Boccaccio Makes A Convert*

This course of argument made me thoughtful, especially since it contrasted with what I was accustomed to hear of the Catholic Church. Every successive generation of Sweden is fed up on stories by Zarchris Topelius who delights in depicting cunning, treacherous, and blood-thirsty Jesuits and monks. Unfortunately it is a sorry fact that the attitude of many Swedes toward the Catholic Church is determined by such novelists as Topelius, Aberg, Bjursten, etc. Who in France, for instance, would dare to construe a picture of the Church according to the freak fancy of a Eugène Sue or Alexandre Dumas? Our romantic novelists always portray Gustav Adolf, whose abilities no one would deny, as a defender of faith who went to Germany to defend the faith against the encroachment of vicious Catholics. Nevertheless I made the startling discovery in the study of history that the Protestant nobility of Germany, and even his own brother-in-law, the Elector of Brandenburg, did not hail him as liberator at his arrival, but did all in their power to prevent him from putting his foot on German soil. I read much at that time and had never met a Catholic. At the age of sixteen I was confirmed in the Protestant Church St. Clara, which had been the church of the Poor Sisters of St. Clara before the Reformation. I often discussed matters with my teacher of religion at high school. He was a Protestant pastor with Catholic tendencies and even had his daughter reared a Catholic in a foreign school.

The reading of authors of every kind was my favorite pastime. Thus I became acquainted with the beliefs of the Unitarians, Theosophists, Positivists, etc. I even read quite a bulk of Buddhistic literature and also occupied myself exhaustively with the Koran. At the same time I became conversant with the writings of Pascal, Stalker, Dummond, Balfour, and also with those of Thomas á Kempis.

Gradually the thought of becoming a Catholic matured in my heart. According to an old family policy we were accustomed to approach immediately the highest authorities when matters of importance turned up. Consequently I also went directly to the Vicar-Apostolic, Bishop Albert Bitter, with my worries without telling my folks of my intentions. It was on a Good Friday, which fact his Lordship, who received me most kindly, called to mind several times during the interview. He informed me that on account of my youth the Swedish law did not permit me to become a convert without the express permission of my father. He repeatedly invited me to dinner, called me by my first name, and preserved this amiable habit to his death. I, on the other hand, was privileged to call his Lordship *Farbror* (Father-brother) which quaint Swedish term of friendship reflected much honor on me on account of the high standing of my episcopal friend. We also took walks together. Naturally these meetings were of great educational value to me; however, the Bishop refused to discuss religious problems with me. This seemed strange to me, for religious questions troubled me most. At last I could contain myself no longer. I felt that I would have to confide the whole matter to my father. I was nineteen years old. However, my disclosure upset him completely.

My father, whom I shall always remember with filial love, favored no religion in particular. Like most Swedes he professed indifferentism in regard to all creeds. However, the thought that I contemplated becoming a Catholic, a "traitor to the faith of my fathers" upset everybody. I was sent to the pastor of the old St. Nicolas Church, which had formerly been Catholic, for enlightenment. A long cross examination followed during which the pastor kept making notes. I did not deem this a very polite procedure, but after all I was merely a young man, a nonentity, in the presence of a superior. My



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astonishment increased when the pastor finally put his whole script in a sealed envelope and asked me to give it to my father. I took the letter rather apprehensively. To the present day I have not found out the full contents of the ominous letter. As my father told me four years later, it stated that I was so tinged with Catholic ideas, that I was a hopeless case, and that it would be best to expel me from home and to forget about me. Since, however, I was not conscious of any guilt, I refused to go. But a difficult time followed during which I had occasion to test my endurance for a year and a half. At last I received permission to take instructions from His Grace, and a Jesuit priest was commissioned to acquaint me with the Catholic Faith. Father Edward Wessel, S.J., who some time later received me into the Church, became my first confessor and rendered me invaluable service when difficulties arose.

The attitude of the average Swede is reflected in the following episode. When I told one of my former teachers the fact of my conversion, he was unable to form any other conclusion than that I must have led a very loose life if I thus precipitously flung myself into the arms of the Catholic Church.

In the meantime I had reached my majority and received the means to continue my studies on the continent. Attempts to win me for the ministry were unsuccessful. It seems that my subsequent meandering course of life was inevitable. Is it determinism to point to all that one was willing to undertake but failed to do, to recall all deviations from the path one had chosen to tread?

On one thing I am resolved, I shall ever thank God for the unmerited grace of having been called before millions of others to the one, true Faith.

## I PRAYED FOR CATHOLICS

SIGRID SWANBOM

THE Swedish National Church celebrates annually the so-called Feast of the Reformation. On this occasion sermons are preached from all pulpits extolling the achievements of Protestantism, which gave our people the precious gift of spiritual liberty. Catholicism is painted in the blackest colors in order that Protestantism may compare all the more favorably with the superstition it supplanted. The Feast of the Reformation awakened in me every time a feeling of sympathy for the misled Catholics and I was induced to pray for them long after the feast in order that God might also let His light and truth shine upon them.

In later years I had occasion to pay a chance visit to a Catholic country. Naturally I was determined to acquaint myself with Catholicism as it was practised there. The thought of ever becoming a Catholic myself never as much as entered my mind. On the contrary, I was positively convinced of my superiority and preferential position in matters of religion. My interest in Catholicism was, therefore, not the result of a yearning for truth, but of a certain inquisitiveness which condescendingly sought to explore a piece of medieval darkness.

The first question which craved an answer was: Do Catholics believe in the divinity of Christ? It was an important question which had vexed me for many years. I had heard many and brilliant Protestant sermons which



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proclaimed Jesus as the ideal man. In the course of time this gospel of the ideal man, Jesus, proved discouraging to those who felt their impotency of ever reaching such an ideal state. For this reason I was dumbfounded as well as impressed to learn that this problem did not exist for the average Catholic for the simple reason that he believes unconditionally in the divinity of Christ.

For a long time I had been in sympathy with the so-called ecumenical movements within the Protestant church, for I knew from personal experience the unhappy divisions caused by the varied sects in parishes and families of Sweden. The next question to which I wanted an answer consequently was: "By what means did the Catholic Church retain her unity?" In the Italian city where I lived, I discovered no trace of sectarianism. Such a unity of faith was a revelation to me. Only after a thorough study did I come to the realization of its cause, which somewhat unsettled my Protestant superiority complex.

My visits to Catholic churches became more frequent. Holy Mass and the silent adoration of the faithful attracted me in particular. I was weary of polished sermons replete with pious generalities. Nevertheless I love, and still love, the Swedish National Church because I am convinced that she did all that she was able to do.

One morning during Holy Mass, it was just at the moment of elevation, God favored me with a special grace. I suddenly felt in my heart the presence of Him whom I sought. The words of St. Peter came to my mind: "Lord, it is well to be here." Divine Providence also led me to a priest who had retired on account of poor health and could devote his time to me. This priest was a model of patience and was ever ready to answer all questions I put to him. Some explanations, especially of indulgences, had to be repeated time and again. I

told the priest frankly which religious practices were repulsive to me: the rattling off of the Rosary, the apparently greater devotion to the Blessed Mother and the Saints than to Christ in the Blessed Sacrament, the mercenary attitude of many Catholics toward God, etc. This last difficulty was cleared up by a word of the late Father Lippert who writes in *Von Wundern und Geheimnissen*: "To perform a meritorious work means merely that our loving glance to God is returned by Him in the same way." My priestly instructor was not loath to admit the justice of my criticism. Thus I learned that also the clergy deplore certain abuses which so often mar the piety of the faithful and do all in their power to suppress them.

The priest asked me to distinguish above all between the teachings of the Church and her history. The teachings of the Church are divine and unchangeable; however, her representatives and followers remain imperfect, which explains why offenders of her law will be found in every century.

From the day I became interested in Catholicism to the time I crossed the threshold of the Church many years elapsed. I read scores of Catholic books before I made my decision. The *Imitation of Christ* by Thomas á Kempis and *Saint Francis* by Johannes Joergensen impressed me more profoundly than anything else I read.

The great yearning for religious unity which animates Catholics and Protestants alike will no doubt some day find its realization. Our Divine Saviour Himself uttered a prayer for union before His departure from this world: "That they all may be one." We, whose fondest wishes crave this unity, can hasten the day of fulfillment by redoubling our prayers for our separated brethren.



## A LAND OF PEACE AND BLISS

PASTOR JAKOB OLRIK

MY FATHER was pastor of the Lutheran so-called People's Church, which is subsidized by the government of Denmark. He had charge of a parish in Fünen, on the peninsula Hindsholm, a fertile and picturesque country whose straw-thatched cottages, gardens, woods, and hill afford a splendid view together with the near ocean: the Great Belt, Dalby Bay, Kattegat, and Odense Fjord. The parsonage was spacious and venerable looking in its interior because of its antique furniture. The outer walls were clad with ivy, clematis, and white and red roses. Even some genuine Madeira grape vines, which every summer hung full of clusters of luscious grapes, adorned the house. The garden surrounding our dwelling was likewise very large. It abounded in apple, pear, and plum trees, in raspberries, currants, and other tempting fruits. Vacation days were particularly delightful and were spent with our guests in swimming, dancing, playing, and singing. Still all this did not cause the works of piety to be relegated to the background. What, indeed, under such circumstances, could one desire even more from God? And yet there was a void in my life somewhere, though I did not realize what it was that my heart yearned for.

My father's duty was to conduct services in two old and venerable churches, both of which dated back to the Catholic Middle Ages. He was not an exponent of a definite religious group nor a member of the Home Mission nor of *Grundtvigianism*, though his Catholic tendencies

made him more inclined to the latter. He had also, in his younger days, spent a winter at Rome and had been deeply impressed by many things he witnessed there — perhaps more deeply in fact than he cared to admit. On our walls hung seventeen pictures, each of which illustrated some specific dogma. Of course they were of artistic value, but at the same time their selection was indicative of a certain general religious tendency. In spite of this my father was by no means favorably inclined toward the Catholic Church.

I should not fail to say of him that he was goodhearted, just, and logical in his reasoning. But precisely on that account his spiritual development was hampered, for in the long run logic and Protestantism do not go well together. A Danish Lutheran theologian once remarked: "If one wants to be logical, one must either turn crazy or Catholic."

When I reached my eighteenth year, my father became an invalid and, consequently, developed a nervous disposition which greatly impeded any exchange of thought. He played the piano fairly well, but his voice was not exactly beautiful. Nevertheless he was wont to play and sing with so much pathos that I rarely heard anything like to it.

Two incidents and impressions of my youth I recall in particular. On one of these I was sitting next to him and through the window viewed a patch of red evening sky in an opening of the green foliage of the garden. The red evening sky seemed to me emblematic of a land of peace and bliss. Some time later, on Christmas eve, I again sat with my father in his study and watched the flicker of shadows on the ceiling caused by the candles on the Christmas tree. On such occasions my spirit became buoyant with the atmosphere of home life, but still I said to myself: "Something is lacking to me. This is not perfect life as yet."



## *A Land Of Peace And Bliss*

My mother came from Jutland, where I was born, and as a genuine son of Jutland I extremely resented being deceived or duped. What I feared most was the possibility of being a victim of deception at the end of the world and I did not want to take a chance. I was wholly bent on reaching heaven and horrified at the thought of hell.

My first acquaintance with the Catholic Church took place in Odense where I attended high school. From my window I could look into the classroom of the Catholic school where the Sisters of St. Joseph instructed the children. With the aid of my pocket mirror I focused the sun's rays in the classroom causing a lot of disturbance with my deviltry. Years later as a student of law in Copenhagen I had occasion to hear the Jesuit Breitung discuss Darwinism. This inspired me with awe for the learned priest.

Divine Providence, however, came to my assistance through the medium of an illustrated weekly which carried a picture — a negative photo — of the famous shroud of Turin showing the likeness of our Lord. According to an old tradition the body of our Lord was wrapped in this linen after His death. It was clear to me at once that the picture was something unusual. My knowledge of anatomy as well as of art convinced me that a fraudulent trick was out of the question. I do not intend to broach the question of the genuineness of the reproduction, but it is a fact that this picture became my guiding star to Catholicism. The picture was taken by Father Sana Soloro and is the best I have seen.

Only after a lapse of several years did I have occasion to occupy myself more thoroughly with the origin of the shroud of Turin. This investigation brought me in touch with Johann Theodor von Euch. Something about him surprised me: his unaffectedness, friendliness, and strength of character. As a result I became curious and anxious to know something about Catholicism itself

which until then I was accustomed to consider as something foolish. I reasoned thus: If a man is an ignoramus — and I took every Catholic to be one — it is possible that he gets along well for a time with the help of money and material things, but in the long run he is doomed to failure, especially if he is at the head of a great undertaking. How then is it possible for the Catholic Church to continue on? I was frankly puzzled and determined to study Catholic dogma as soon as possible in order to find a solution.

One more thing paved for me the way to Catholicism. As a Protestant I was continually and unpleasantly conscious of my own limitations and I often wondered how it would be possible to get beyond myself. All efforts on my part to advance had brought but little results. I found no solution for my problems save in my own argumentations. Finally, the question whether or not a war, also a war of defense, could be morally justified induced me to pray for enlightenment to the Holy Ghost. I realized that my own reasoning could just as readily lead me to a false as to a correct conclusion. Still further in search of the true Faith, I put all my hopes in prayer. I said to myself: If I ask God with all sincerity for the truth and the strength to follow it, He is bound to hear me. In particular I relied again on the assistance of the Holy Ghost who has ever afterwards been the special object of my homage.

When I became assessor, God's Providence directed me to the small town of Koge. A Catholic priest, Father Maurer, had been transferred to the same town shortly before my arrival. I made up my mind to pay him a visit and incidentally to embarrass him with my questions. But soon I was aware of the conclusiveness of Catholic theology. For a long time I parried the arguments of Father Maurer till I finally had to admit my defeat. Still I waited a whole year to find out whether I could not after all discover a flaw in Catholic doctrine, but all was of no



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avail. Strengthened by the prayers of good Catholic friends I at last decided to join the Catholic Church. I realized moreover that I could no longer tarry without jeopardizing the salvation of my soul.

Thus I finally reached the land of peace and bliss which I had seen symbolically in the patch of red evening sky long ago. Our own narrow limitations can be widened by the grace of God. The reasonableness of the Catholic religion has given me a wonderful insight into many things. Once the picture of Christ on the shroud of Turin impressed me deeply, so that I shall never forget this image of our Lord. May God in His goodness grant that I may some day behold Him face to face.

## BY WAY OF FRANCISCAN SANCTUARIES

BARONESSE ERIKKE ROSENÖRN-LEHN

I WAS born and reared in a Protestant family, the youngest of six children. My mother was deeply religious and personally gave us religious instructions implanting in my young heart the seeds of piety. Being the daughter of a diplomat, she herself had spent her childhood days in Frankfurt on the Main. Catholic playmates unconsciously influenced her in no little degree. Among these was Prince Karl Loewenstein who later on became a Dominican. My mother corresponded with him until her death. Catholic ceremonies likewise influenced her profoundly. Subsequent change of living quarters, however, removed her altogether from Catholic influences. Not before one of her married daughters and sons-in-law were received into the Church by the Bishop of Geneva, Cardinal Merillod, did she begin to read Catholic literature.

The rural solitude of Castle Hvidkilde, our home, afforded her the wanted leisure for careful study in consequence of which she came to the conclusion that the Catholic Church was the true Church of Christ. My father had no objection to her conversion as such. Only he asked her to postpone it until the time of my confirmation. So at the age of ten I was withdrawn from my mother and turned over to a Protestant minister for tutelage and religious instruction. This minister was a very good and truly pious man. Aware of my mother's inclinations, both he and the members of his family did all in their power to confirm me in my Protestant belief.



## *By Way of Franciscan Sanctuaries*

As a consequence my convictions remained unaltered even after my mother and two older sisters had jointly entered the Church shortly after my confirmation which took place when I was about fifteen years old. Believing firmly all the falsehoods circulated against the Church, I naturally mourned the loss of my mother and sisters who, in my opinion, had become the victims of superstition and idolatry.

Thus ten years of mutual suffering passed by. We loved each other, but still we were spiritually separated. In order to escape this unbearable mental estrangement, I decided to go to England to take up the study of classical art. When I left my home country, in the spring of 1898, I was just 26 years old.

In England the religious services of the Anglican Church impressed me deeply. I was furthermore impressed by the fact that apparently the veneration of saints was not taboo in England as in Denmark. At the same time, however, my faith in the Protestant "saints" — Martin Luther and Gustav Adolf of Sweden — received a mild shock. My historical studies, and in particular the perusal of the books of the Anglican Professor Leighton Pullan of Oxford, as well as *The Confessions* of St. Augustine and *The Fioretti* of St. Francis, made it clearer to me that God could have intended but one Church. Still, though my attitude toward the Catholic Church had undergone a change, I remained of the opinion that the Church consisted of different branches. I even called myself an Anglican, not realizing the contradiction contained in the assumption of being a member of a national church without belonging to that nation.

The winter of 1901-02 I spent at the British School of Antique Culture in Athens. Sophie Holten, an accomplished artist and my faithful companion during my travels, accompanied me to Greece. Our studies as well as religious development ran parallel. She it was who sug-

*Baronesse Erikke Rosenörn-Lehn*

gested that I have a Mass said for my mother in a Catholic Church. But a remark of the friendly priest who promised to pray for the conversion of Denmark hurt my feelings to the quick and I thought by myself: "How impertinent these Catholics are!" Nevertheless some months later, when visiting the tomb of St. Nicolaus in Bari, I gave the local priest an alms with the request to pray for me.

Our next stop was Aquila, which harbors the grave of St. Bernardine of Siena. From my childhood days I had considered St. Bernardine more or less of a Protestant on account of his zeal for the veneration of the Holy Name of Jesus. I viewed with great interest his death mask with the imprint of his mild and lofty features. It was dusk when I stood at his tomb. While Sophie Holten followed the Franciscan priest, who served us as guide, to inspect other works of art, I was left alone, and kneeling at the tomb I implored God with deep emotion to make me as holy as San Bernadino. In the same moment I was conscious of my own inability and added: "But it will be some job for You." Then, promptly, I became ashamed of my spiritual indolence and with tears asked God for forgiveness.

The following night I spent in prayer as a preparation for a visit to the tomb of St. Francis, for our next goal was Assisi. The experience that was ours at the tomb of the great Saint was such a miracle of grace that even eternity will not suffice to thank God adequately for His bountiful goodness. Of the many experiences which held us in its meshes as captives of God's grace the truly evangelical poverty and charity of the Franciscans was not the least.

Owing to an illness of my father I was compelled to return home at the beginning of September. As my train crossed from the Catholic countries into the Protestant parts of Germany, I suddenly felt the void and chill as it were of the churches dotting the scenery. Christ did not



## *By Way of Franciscan Sanctuaries*

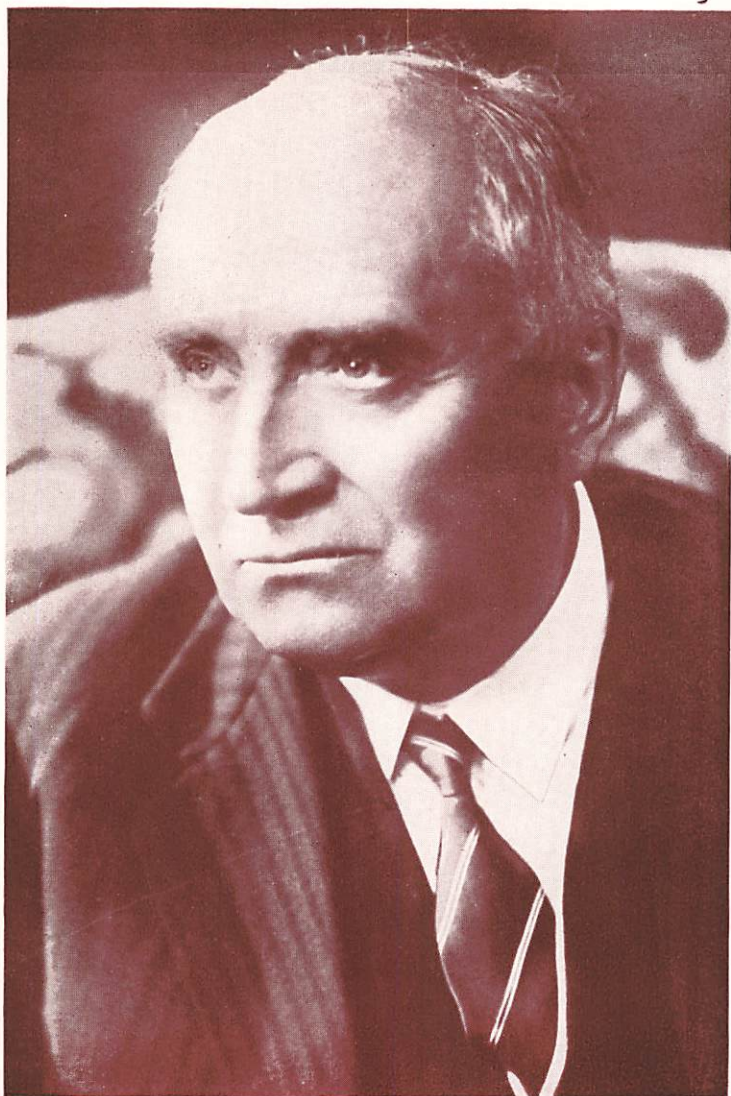
live in them. After arriving at home, I was able as never before to converse with my mother, and to tell her of my experience in Assisi. No doubt she recognized how close I had already come to the Church, even though I myself was not aware of it at that time.

During my absence from Assisi the good Friars continued their prayers for me at the tomb of St. Francis. I arrived again in Assisi on the vigil of the Feast of St. Francis just when the solemn vespers were being chanted. It was a homecoming in the true sense of the word. The next morning when the *Credo* was being sung during the solemn High Mass in the lower Church and the words *Et unam sanctam, catholicam et apostolicam ecclesiam* resounded through the basilica, the full and shining light of faith dawned upon me.

The Rev. Father Custos, Padre Francesco dall'Olio, had already given me instructions for hours at a time during the preceding months, but I still needed a final decisive "urge" to spur me on. My goal was reached. It was not equally easy for Sophie Holten to make her final decision. She was the daughter of a Protestant minister, the descendant of a whole generation of ministers. She felt as though a conversion on her part would be tantamount to a condemnation of her family. Nevertheless, faith also triumphed in her.

On the feast day of St. Elizabeth, November 19, the namesday of my mother and my baptismal day, both of us were received into the Church at the tomb of St. Francis.

Thanks be to God eternally for this unmerited grace.



*M. Claude*



## IN THE GRIP OF GOD

HIS EXCELLENCY PAUL CLAUDEL

I WAS born August 6, 1868. My conversion took place December 25, 1886. I was then eighteen years old, but in spite of my youth my character had already assumed a definite bent.

Although my ancestors on both sides were God-fearing people and had even given a number of priests to the Church, my family was religiously indifferent. In fact, after we moved to Paris, the family finally abandoned the Faith of its fathers. I received my First Holy Communion with fervor and devotion; however, the event was, as for most of us youngsters, the crowning and the end of the religion of my childhood.

To begin with, my education or rather instruction was placed in the hands of a private tutor; later on I attended one of the "lay" or atheistic schools of the Province, until I finally landed at the Lycée Louis le Grand where any lingering survival of belief was gradually extinguished. The multitude of worlds seemed incompatible with Revelation. The reading of Renan's *Life of Christ* furnished still more pretexts for changing one's convictions, and this was facilitated by everything one saw and heard.

Let us only recall the deplorable time in the eighties when the output of naturalistic literature reached its peak. Never did the yoke of the merely material weigh so heavily on mankind. The bearers of every prominent name in art, science, and literature professed themselves

## *In The Grip Of God*

to be irreligious. All the so-called distinguished persons of this declining century were anticlerical. Renan was omnipotent. In person he presided at the last prize giving which I attended at the Lycée Louis le Grand, and my impression is that I received the prize from his hands. Victor Hugo had just disappeared in a blaze of glory.

A boy of eighteen, I believed what most of the so-called educated class of that period believed. The vivid conception of the Individual and the Concrete had become for me a vague matter. I accepted the monistic and mechanistic hypothesis in its entirety. It was my belief that everything was governed by a natural order of things, that this world of ours was a strangely knotted network of cause and effect, whose complexity science would unravel in due time. Moreover all this caused me to be bored and to lose heart. The Kantian Imperative, which Mr. Burdeau, our Professor of Philosophy, tried to make presentable, I somehow or other failed to digest.

It is not surprising, then, that I lived without a moral code and that a somber despair was already my familiar companion. The death of my grandfather proved dreadfully shocking to me. The final stage of his prolonged illness, due to cancer of the stomach, caused me to be haunted by a continuous fear of death. I had completely forgotten any religious teaching I had ever had, and my ignorance in religion could only be compared to that of a pagan.

The first glimpse of truth came to me from the works of a great poet, to whom I am eternally grateful, and who played an overwhelming part in the forming of my mind: Arthur Rimbaud. His *Illuminations* and then later *A Season in Hell* were for me an extraordinary event. For the first time my material conception of life was being shaken; for a moment these books gave me a living and almost physical impression of the supernatural. Still



my habitual state of asphyxia and despair remained the same.

It was this unhappy youth, who on Christmas day, 1886, made his way to Notre Dame, the great Cathedral of Paris on the banks of the Seine, to attend the Christmas service. I had just begun to write, and with the superior air of the amateur that I was, I hoped to draw from the Catholic ceremonial an inspiration for some decadent exercise in prose. In such a frame of mind, jostled and shoved about by the crowd, I attended High Mass with moderate gratification. Having nothing better to do I returned again in the afternoon for Vespers. The boys of the Cathedral choir, robed in white cassocks, and the pupils of the Minor Seminary of Saint Nicolas du Char-donnet, who were assisting, had just begun to sing a hymn which I later recognized to be the *Magnificat*. I myself was standing in the crowd near the second pillar at the entrance to the choir, to the right.

It was then that occurred the happening which is dominant in my life. Suddenly, in an instant, in a fraction of time, the current of my life was altered and I believed. I believed with such force and adherence, with such an uprising of my whole being, with a conviction so powerful, with such certainty leaving no sort of doubt, that since then all books, all reasoning, all the hazards of a constantly changing life have not been able to shake my belief, nor indeed, to speak truly, to touch it. All at once I felt the heart-rending touch of innocence, of being a child of God, of partaking in an unspeakable revelation. In trying, as I have often done, to reconstruct the moments which followed upon this extraordinary instant, I find the following element which yet formed but one lightning flash, one identical arm of which Divine Providence made use to reach and open the heart of one poor, desperate child: "How happy those who believe — but if it were true? It is true! God exists. He is present.

## *In The Grip Of God*

He is Someone, He is a Being as personal as Myself! He loves me, He calls me!" Tears came to the relief of this overwhelming moment, the lovely strains of the *Adeste Fideles* added to its profound poignancy.

A tender touch of emotion, which, however, was still mingled with a feeling of dismay and even of horror! For the false philosophies by which I lived could not easily be cast aside. God had left them disdainfully where they were, and I could find no reason for changing them. Catholicism still seemed to me a storehouse of absurd anecdotes: its priests and faithful inspired in me the same aversion as before, which went so far as hatred, so far as disgust. The edifice of my opinions and of my knowledge remained standing and I saw no defect in it. I had only stepped out of it. Yet a new and formidable Being, with demands terrible for the youth and artist that I was had revealed Itself and in such a way that I knew not how to reconcile It with anything in my surroundings. The only comparison I can find to express my utter confusion is the plight of a man who by one single grip has been forcibly peeled out of his skin and transposed somewhere into a strange body. All that was most repugnant to my opinions and tastes was nevertheless true, and with it, willy-nilly, I had to come to terms. Ah! I was not willing to surrender without having first tried all possible means of resistance.

It was a terrific struggle that lasted four years. I dare say it was a brave defense, and the fight was honest and radical. Nothing was left undone. I used all means of resistance at my command. One by one I had to surrender my weapons. The great crisis of my life had come, a mental agony, which Arthur Rimbaud characterizes with the words: "The spiritual battle is as brutal as any battle among men. O dark night! My face reeks with blood!" The young people who so readily abandon their faith do not realize what painful efforts are required to regain



the same! The thought of Hell as well as the thought of beauty and all the joys, which to my uninstructed belief I had to sacrifice upon my return to the truth, caused me to postpone my decision.

At last I opened a Bible; it was a Protestant edition, the gift of a German friend to my sister Camille. The event occurred on the evening of that memorable day I spent in Notre Dame, after I had returned home through a drizzling rain over streets which now seemed so strangely unfamiliar. For the first time I heard the Voice of Holy Scripture, so gentle and so inflexible, which has never since ceased to echo in my heart. Until now I knew the history of Christ only through Renan and, by giving implicit credence to this impostor, I did not even know that Jesus Christ had ever claimed to be the Son of God. Every word, every line refuted with a majestic simplicity the impudent assertions of the apostate and unsealed my eyes. The truth prevailed. With the centurion I owned it, Jesus was the Son of God. Me, Paul, He singled out above all others and assured me of His love. But at the same time, if I did not follow Him, He left me no alternative but damnation. Ah, I had no need to have Hell explained to me: I had done my "season" there. Those few hours had sufficed to show me that Hell is everywhere where Jesus Christ is not. And what mattered to me the rest of the world in comparison to this new and prodigious Being who had just been revealed to me?

Thus spoke the new man within me. But the old one still resisted with all the strength of a strong nature and would not abandon anything of the life just opening before him. Shall I admit that the thought of announcing my conversion to everyone, of telling my parents that I wished to abstain on Fridays, of proclaiming myself one of those much derided Catholics, threw me into fits of cold perspiration, and that at times I grew indignant at

## *In The Grip Of God*

the powers that captivated me? Still there was no escape from the firm grip of God.

I knew no priest, neither had I a single Catholic friend.

Yet the study of religion henceforth became my chief interest. Strange to relate, the awakening of my soul and the unfolding of my poetic talents went hand in hand, and dispelled my prejudice and my childish apprehensions. At this time I wrote the first version of my dramas *The Golden Head* and *The City*. Although I could not, of course, receive the Sacraments, nevertheless I shared in the life of the Church. At last I began to breathe and life entered through all my pores. The books which proved very helpful during that period were first of all the *Meditations* of Pascal, a veritable mine of wealth for all those who are in quest of the true Faith, even if his influence has been rather destructive at some time. Then *The Uplifting of the Soul by the Divine Mysteries* and the *Meditations on the Gospel* by Bossuet, as well as his other philosophical essays; Dante's *Divine Comedy*; not to forget the marvelous private revelations of Catherine Emmerick. The metaphysic of Aristotle had purged my mind and helped me to find my way in the purely intellectual domains of science. The *Imitation of Christ* belonged to a world quite incomprehensible to me and seemed to be the voice of a most austere master, in the first two books.

But *the* book, which opened itself to me and in which I studied, was the Church. Eternally blessed be this great majestic Mother on whose knees I learned everything! I spent my Sundays at Notre Dame and went there as often as possible on weekdays. I was still profoundly ignorant of the doctrine of the Church as anybody could be of Buddhism. But now the sacred drama unrolled itself before me with a magnificence that surpassed all my imaginings. Ah! that was no longer the trivial language of the prayer books. It was the most profound



and grandiose poetry, enhanced by the most august gestures ever confided to human beings. I could not sufficiently satiate myself with the spectacle of the Mass and every movement of the priest inscribed itself profoundly on my mind and soul. The reading of the Office of the Dead, the liturgy of Christmas, the drama of Holy Week, the celestial *Exultet*, compared with which the enchanting songs of Pindar and Sophocles seemed dull, filled me with gratitude and joy, contrition and devotion. Little by little, slowly and painfully, the conviction grew within me that art and poetry are likewise divine things and that the pleasures of the flesh, far from being indispensable, are on the contrary actually detrimental to them. How I envied those happy Christians whom I saw receiving Holy Communion! Hardly did I venture to mingle among those faithful who came every Friday in Lent to venerate with a devout kiss the Crown of Thorns.

Meanwhile the years passed by and my situation became unbearable. Amid tears I entreated God, and yet I did not dare to divulge my misery. Day by day my arguments grew weaker and the voice within me became more demanding. Oh, how well I recall this moment and how firmly God held my soul in the grip of His hand! How did I ever muster enough courage to resist Him? In the third year I read the posthumous works of Baudelaire. And I saw that the poet, whom I preferred to all other French writers, had in his declining years turned again to the faith of his fathers, and that he had grappled with the same fear and suffered the same qualms of conscience as I. So summoning all my courage I one evening entered the confessional of St. Médard, my parish church. The moments I had to wait for the priest were the most bitter of my life. I found an old man who seemed very little impressed by what I had to say, although the story of my soul should have aroused, as I fancied, a deep concern. To my profound regret, he

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recalled to my mind the day of my First Holy Communion. He commanded me to reveal my conversion to my family; which I now would not have disproved of. Humiliated and chagrined, I left the confessional and returned only the following year.

At last I found myself completely conquered and defeated. I had come to a dead stop when, in the same church of St. Médard, I found a sympathetic and compassionate young priest, the Abbé Ménard, who reconciled me with the Church. Later on I became acquainted with the saintly and venerable Abbé Villaume. I chose him as my spiritual father and guide. I received my second Holy Communion, like the first, on Christmas day, December 25, 1890, in the Cathedral of Notre Dame.



## LIGHT FROM ABOVE

FRANCIS JAMMES

*I AM He who teacheth men knowledge and who giveth a more clear understanding to little ones than can be taught by men. . . .*

*I am He that in an instant elevateth the humble mind to comprehend more reasons of the eternal truth than if any one had studied ten years in the schools. I teach without noise of words, without confusion of opinions, without ambition of honour, without strife of arguments. — Following of Christ, III, 43; 2, 3.*

Of all conversions, mine is the most obscure and insignificant. Not with blossoms of joy in my hands and honeyed songs on my lips did I walk toward the Lord. I was a gloomy child who became dizzy, and lost his balance, and suddenly seized the branch he espied on the shore. That branch, which the Virgin held forth to the small girl who was drowning in the mountain torrent of Betharram. I had quenched my thirst at many a brook; had eaten of many a fruit. I discerned the boundaries which man may not transgress. A chilling sadness crept over me, a kind of death hovered above me, because I did not realize that it is impossible to do evil and at the same time ask God for the gift of another grace.

I again behold myself as one day I lay prostrate on my couch, miserable in body and soul, humiliated, wretched, and nervous. When I rose from my prostration after twenty minutes I muttered with a tear-choked voice: "It must exist, or nothing at all exists."

## *Light From Above*

What must exist? The Catholic, Apostolic, and Roman Church. Paul Claudel, my second guardian angel, had, in spite of oceans parting us, begun again to instruct me regarding the Church.

On that Sunday I arose in order to weep at Mass in the Cathedral of Bordeaux. In the depths of my being a feeling of joy broke forth to be my light. Was it possible that a man could experience such bliss? For the first time I, the heathen, became aware of a movement which God originated in the forlornness of my existence. You, the Father, I acknowledged from the first!

Still, practice had to follow in order that the heavenly light of grace could cast a sheen into the crevices of the earthen mass, such as I am. I was tormented by bitter pangs of conscience which grew so violent that I doubted whether confession and Communion would at all be possible for me. One day, however, I came to the conclusion: It is impossible that God hinder a person, who longs for Him, from uniting himself with Him. After asking advice, I decided then and there to walk over thistles and vermin. As a sorrowful pilgrim I implored our Lord Jesus Christ to accept in compensation my spiritual trials whose maturation so many priests unwittingly frustrate.

I still see the unadorned chamber in which Father Michel heard my confession and gave me Holy Communion on July 7, 1905. Claudel assisted; his beaming countenance bent over the sacred vessels. I remember my melancholy mood, a small vineyard with an orchard, a sweet scented plantation.

You know it, you my dear spiritual Father, and you, Brother, who didst return from China during these great days before Corpus Christi, that I have waxed strong. You know, that I applied myself to my task without confusion when so many weak ones cried out over my diminution. You know that the Saviour from the



*Francis Jammes*

wedding feast of Cana blessed me, that I pitched a tent;  
made an abode. That I populated it in the care of God  
with four children, the last of which is named Paul,  
your godchild, Claudel.

## DISILLUSIONED BY COMMUNISM

DON ENRIQUE MATORRAS

I WAS born into this world as a child of the working class — my father being a mail carrier and my mother from the country — and was compelled to work from my early youth. At the age of eleven I quit the boarding school where I had been placed and accepted a job at a newspaper stand, at the Cafe Oriente in Atocha, Madrid Street. My education, which I received from the School Brothers of St. John the Baptist de la Salle, was superior to that of most of the children of the working class of my age. In fact, the very thorough training in the elementary school of the Brothers would have proven a veritable blessing to me if subsequent guidance had not been lacking. Since, however, I was left to myself, my knowledge was of no benefit whatsoever to me. Work was very hard. From eight o'clock in the morning till eleven at night I was exposed to the inclemencies of the weather.

Due to my sensitive nature I became dissatisfied with my lot. I compared my life to that of the other young people who passed me on their way to the College of Medicine close by and who, for reasons I could not understand, seemed to get a better chance in life than I. Consequently I grew more ambitious. I longed to share their opportunities, to increase my knowledge, and complete my education. Soon I began to read with gusto. Indeed I began to read everything I could get hold of: newspapers, magazines, books of all kinds, and being unaware of the dangers of indiscriminate reading, one



## *Don Enrique Matorras*

of the first results was the loss of my Faith. The Church, according to my newly-formed conviction, was the cause of my social insecurity.

During the ensuing years it was my endeavor to attend lectures on all kinds of topics, to read books of divers contents, and to visit any assembly where, in my opinion, I might increase my knowledge. The result, again, was a complete mental confusion. At the same time there began in Spain a period of political unrest preceded by the overthrow of the Dictator Primo de Rivera which but tended to augment the feeling of unrest within me. Many things occupied me during these turbulent days. Among others, I attended a business school, but, to tell the truth, I was much more interested in politics than in my studies. At the outbreak of the revolution in December, 1930, I made up my mind to join the ranks of the Communists. A few months previous I had already associated with a group of Revolutionaries who edited the weekly *Rebellion*. Even though this publication did not openly espouse the cause of Marxism, it nevertheless was of a very materialistic trend. My contributions to this periodical were mostly directed against religion and the Church.

My official reception into the Communist Party took place in December, 1930. After having been a member of a so-called "cell" for a time, I received an appointment by the high command as a member on the Committee of the Communist Youth Organization. It is needless to mention that the works of Marx, Engels, Lenin, Bucharin, and Stalin, henceforth became my favorite reading matter. My devotion to my new activities knew no bounds. In April, 1931, the Republic was proclaimed and soon after the Youth Organization published the *Juventud Roja (Red Youth)*. Both as manager and member of the editorial staff of the said publication, as well as member of the Madrid Committee, I was in-

## *Disillusioned By Communism*

creasingly active. It would lead too far were I to dwell at length on all the revolutionary enterprises which at that time accelerated the growth of Spanish Communism.

Many times I got into trouble. Once I was arrested in an attempt to form a "cell" within the military garrison, and was arraigned before the military tribunal. The subsequent prison term, which was for me a period of rest, study, and reflection, only confirmed me in my revolutionary ideals. The prison was my home, school, sanctuary, and all. My detention lasted six months. At the time of my acquittal the *Mundo Obrero* (*The Workers' World*) had already made its appearance. However, my appointment as editor of this paper was of short duration since the paper was confiscated and suppressed on account of its revolutionary propaganda.

Shortly after, the Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Youth Organization, Etelvino Vega, took sick. In order to prevent his arrest and at the same time to restore his health he was sent to a sanatorium in Russia, whilst I became his successor in office. This new appointment put me at the head of the Communist Youth of Spain. However, with the greater insight in the movement came my disappointments. The more intensively I labored for the cause of Communism the greater was my disillusionment. The private life of the functionaries, the agents of the Third International, of the higher ranking Communists in general, was not without reproach. I saw with my own eyes that the liberation of the proletariat and the rights of the working class were of little concern to them. They were only looking out for themselves and their selfish interests.

Still, I remained faithful to the theories of Marxism, convinced that the shortcomings of individuals were after all human, whilst the ideals of Marxism remained pure and intact. In order to escape any further disillusioning



## *Don Enrique Matorras*

experiences, I continued to intensify my organizatory activities. Again my zeal brought me behind the bars and let me forget all hardships and even hunger on my trips which extended from one end of Spain to the other. I endured all things with enthusiasm and faith, so stanch was my belief in the victorious outcome of the revolution and the reconstruction of society. For the realization of these aims I worked incessantly. Hardly a single Communistic publication came off the press in Spain without a contribution on my part. In my speeches I stirred the masses to a spirit of frenzied hatred and rebellion.

My young and impetuous soul was in need of something higher. It craved to defend and fight for something noble, something more ideal than everything which surrounded me at that time. The whole situation created in me a moral crisis which frequently put me in a state of utter spiritual dejection. Then I sought distraction and diversion where I hoped to find it—in woman. I made the acquaintance of a Communist girl with whom I lived in a happy union. Later on, a baby girl was born to us. But still I remained dissatisfied with myself.

Again I fell back into spiritual crisis, into a state of mental lethargy. On the pretense of being incapacitated, I relaxed in my work and gave myself up to all amusements within my reach. The result was always the same: the feeling of spiritual void and darkness was only augmented. At times I was even fearful of losing my mind. All that had been dear to me in life and had spurred me on in my achievements failed me now and left me stranded, as it were, in a barren land. I had cherished the hope that historical materialism would eventually solve all social problems. But in vain. The realization of its failure weighed me down. Instead of the promised social uplift, I found a disintegrating

## *Disillusioned By Communism*

society full of the same ills and imperfections as in the past, the same sort of "capitalists," who acted as if there were no social problems, who thought of themselves and made concessions to the working classes only under the pressure of circumstances.

In this state of mind, while roaming through one of the parks of Madrid, I met one day an old acquaintance of mine. In the course of our conversation I discovered that my friend had become a spiritist and he invited me to attend a séance. Though I had always laughed at spiritism I accepted the invitation just to have some pastime. As I had expected, I received no novel revelations whatsoever but was merely treated to some grotesque things which amused me. Incidentally, however, something did happen which subsequently proved to be of the greatest importance. I was given a pamphlet containing a digest of Allen Kardec's theories, and in this pamphlet frequent mention was made of "God." This one word revived in me memories of the past: the school, the classmates with whom I had attended Sunday Mass, the day of my First Holy Communion. With such reminiscences I spent the last hours of the day and made up my mind to go to the antiquary the next morning in order to look up some passages in Holy Scripture I had come across.

I bought a Bible and began to read it. It did not take long before I discovered some passages in the Gospels pertaining to social justice. I read them with the keenest interest, and the more I read the more changed my outlook on life began to be. Further studies almost convinced me that probably only the Christian religion could bring a solution of the problems which confronted me. However, it was precisely this discovery which made things complicated for me. I reasoned that even in the event I should decide to break with Communism, still I was under obligation to my wife, the daughter of one of



the foremost leaders of the Communist party in Spain. I was sincerely attached to her and, furthermore, what would become of our daughter for whose future both of us were responsible?

In my dilemma I decided to consult a priest. But to whom should I go? I doubted whether anybody would understand me. In fact, I feared that I would receive no serious attention, and would hear some generalities instead of specific answers to my questions. Nevertheless, I hesitated no longer. Having discovered that the same priest who had baptized me and from whose hands I had received my First Holy Communion was still at the church of SS. Isabelle and Therese, I decided to call on him.

The interview with the said priest decided my whole future. This priest not only viewed my problems sympathetically but he also gave me his encouragement and guidance. He was wholly convinced that God would grant his prayers in my behalf. We agreed to meet every afternoon in the sacristy of the church to discuss religious questions. Our discussions were so fruitful that my doubts regarding revelation were gradually dispelled, and after a lapse of several days Faith was once more revived in my heart and I became convinced that the past would have to be straightened out. This change of heart, from a feeling of coldness and barrenness to a sensation of new warmth and spiritual vitality, gave me much joy. Finally the priest requested me to ascertain prudently the attitude of my wife in the event of my break with Communism. At the same time he urged me to pray most fervently to the Crucified One and implore His graces in my difficulties. I followed his advice and in a few days I persuaded my wife to accompany me to church and attend the instructions.

It did not take long before all obstacles were removed which stood in the way of a validation of our civil

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marriage. All the while I continued to voice my disapproval of the existing social conditions and insisted on having my problems solved in a manner compatible with my newly found religion, in a solution which would protect the rights of the worker against the outrages of the mighty. The priest also helped me in this point. The teachings of Catholic sociology gave me a satisfactory answer to my questions and in my opinion contained the remedy for the liberation of the oppressed. In the teachings of the Catholic Church I found a flaying and most emphatic condemnation of the oppression of the working class. Things went smoothly now. My wife was converted with me and gave her consent for the validation of our marriage in church.

After this conversion of the inner man there but remained for me the obligation to discover a new field of activity which would satisfy me. I joined the ranks of the Catholic Syndicalists and simultaneously published a declaration in the press in which I publicly deplored my former errors and invited the Communistic comrades to follow suit. The Catholic Workingmen's Union revived my hopes in the future. The longer I worked in this organization, the more enthusiastic and convinced I became that the Catholic program is the only way to the salvation of humanity and the working class.

As I now look back on my restless past, on the masses of workers who have been misled and separated from the true source of life, when I see the streets of my native land red with blood because of those theories which I had once so ardently espoused, sorrow and compassion fill my heart. For most of the workers who are led to murder and death by Marxist hatred have been, after all, deceived. They are not bad by nature, and furthermore their demands for social betterment are to some extent justified. Their miserable existence occasioned by the upper class, drives them to acts of despair of which they themselves



*Don Enrique Matorras*

are the victims. In view of this deplorable situation, of this appalling social tragedy, the question is not amiss whether the greatest responsibility for the excesses committed does not after all rest on the wealthy for not fulfilling their moral obligations, for using property as an absolute weapon for the subjugation of the weak!

We cannot escape the truth. We Catholics must face it and may not evade the issues. We, who know and have the remedy, must also fight in order to master the situation. We, who are fortunately acquainted with the full teachings of Christ, have the moral obligation even at the risk of opposition, prejudice, and persecution to raise our voices in protest against social injustice and to command once more reverence for the dignity of the workingman.

## A PATRIOT REVISES HIS VIEWS

DON RAMIRO DE MAEZTU

THE term *convert* would hardly be applicable to me, since the bonds which connected me with the Church have never been severed completely. It is a fact, however, that the first doubts in faith beset me already during the turbulent days of my youth and that I did not bother for years to find someone who might have solved my difficulties. One question to which I never received a satisfactory answer was: Why did God create the devil? But there were other difficulties not of a theological nature.

Ever since I began my literary activities I devoted myself almost exclusively to the problems of my country which was once great and later declined without anyone finding a plausible explanation for its rise and decline. Personally I was for many years of the opinion, and still am, that the Spaniards of the sixteenth and seventeenth century sacrificed the immediate interests of Spain for the honor of God and the Church. Nevertheless, this conviction of mine, though it may seem improbable, has never given rise to a conflict between my religion and my patriotism, as is proven by thousands of articles published in various newspapers during a period of forty years. Not one of these contains anything hostile to the Church.

Quite the contrary, I have always defended, at least casually, the ideals of Christianity at all periods of my life. In particular I recall an article published in the year 1901. At that time the populace of Madrid, as frequently in the nineteenth century, was seized by a violent feeling



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of anticlericalism. Certain events contributed to the success of the antireligious drama *Electra*, by the novelist Galdós. I was among the literary men who stormed the stage of the Teatro Español in order to congratulate the playwright. However, in order to show that my acclamations were not born of anticlericalism, but rather of admiration for the literary genius, I published articles in praise of those virgins who prefer cloistered life to a life in the world, a thesis which contradicted the arguments of the play *Electra*.

The fact that I did not break with the Church entirely was due to the influence of three people. The first of these was the pastor of St. Michael in Vitoria, Don Emeterio de Abechuco, in whose church I was baptized. This priest prepared me most carefully for my First Holy Communion and I had to take instructions at his home every afternoon. The features of Don Emeterio, this genuine friend of books and men, a haggard and ascetic looking man, remained in my memory evermore as a type of manliness and kindness. The second person was a housemaid of Guipuzcoa, Magdalena Echevarria by name. During the forty years she lived in our house, we venerated her as a second mother. The most remarkable thing about her was that, though she had never learned to read or write nor was able to speak the Castilian language correctly, she nevertheless showed great acumen whenever moral problems came to discussion. She was much concerned about the good reputation of our family. Even though I now first realize that she owed her moral insight to her intensively religious life, I, like the rest of the children, always venerated her as a saint or heroine. She was a model of self-denial. The third person I must mention is Manuel de Zurutuza, a friend of my childhood days. I admired him for his keen intellect and manly deportment. He was the first person whose life showed the possibility of a synthesis of faith and reason.

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It may not be commonly known that during the latter part of the past century the Spaniards of North Spain labored under the biased notion that an educated man could not be religious, and a religious man not educated. At all events, the memory of the above-mentioned three pious souls would have sufficed to preserve me from succumbing to materialism which denies the existence of the spirit.

I also remained away from Church because I did not value the remedies she offered for the salvation of my country. Most probably I would have never asked myself seriously whether I was a Catholic or not, if the study of philosophy had not prompted me to do so. Since journalism causes a distracted state of mind, I wasted much time with ephemeral topics of the day without giving attention to the paramount question of life. And thus it took me almost twenty years to travel the same road which St. Augustine covered in ten minutes.

The first philosophical system I studied was that of Benedetto Croce in the year 1908. His *Philosophy of the Spirit* alienated my heart from religion. According to the system of Croce the whole universe is spirit and the spirit needs but freedom to develop from theory into practice, from practice reversely to theory, from esthetic to logic, from economy to ethics, and so forth, indefinitely. The practical conclusions resulting from this philosophy amounted to this, that all conservatives and reactionaries merely showed the inert resistance of *materia* to the spirit. But since Croce did not define *materia*, and not even indirectly admitted its existence, I was compelled to look for another system which would leave me in no such predicament. Thus years passed by till I discovered that in order to "free" the spirit it is very advantageous to master life in a practical way.

Strange as it may seem, I owe my firm religious foundation to Kant, whose philosophy I began to study in Ger-



many in 1911. I am aware that Kant by his teaching of God, the immortality of the soul, and the freedom of the will, as indemonstrable postulates of practical reason, has populated the world with skeptics. I am also aware that the confusion in the world between the spiritual and non-spiritual is due to the logic of Kant. Still he showed me clearly that the spirit cannot emanate from the non-spiritual. What surprised me most in his philosophy was not so much the thesis that aprioristic synthetic deductions could not be valid if the categories of logic were not at the same time categories of essence, but the fact that according to his philosophy such aprioristic synthetic deductions existed at all; the fact that  $2 + 2 = 4$  is an aprioristic synthetic deduction. This proves after all that neither mathematics nor logic can be a product of the material world, but must be a creation of the spirit.

This knowledge made it evident that the spirit did not originate from the material. Forthwith I freed myself also from all Darwinistic influences, which otherwise would have alloyed my outlook on life.

Everything else I learned from Kant seemed insignificant to me in the face of this important conclusion. I do not know, or care to know, whether man's body descended from a monkey or not, but I am certain that a spirit cannot originate from anything else than a spirit. This simple truth will prove self-evident to intelligent people. I am convinced that we would not have so many infidels among the educated classes of the Latin countries if this truth were repeated often enough, for materialism and infidelity go hand in hand with us.

The maxim of Kant: "Act in such a way that your action may at all times be the norm of universal moral law," particularly enthused me, in the first place because it is clear that not all norms of nature, e.g., that the big fish will always eat the little one, can be put up as a maxim of morality, and secondly, because there is a

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recognized tendency among immoral people to infect the good. This means that the action of the generality of men as such is not as yet a moral criterion for the distinction between good and evil. Neither, on the other hand, was I satisfied with the morals of our modern world, which like those of the Socialists attempt to make man happier in a better world without attempting to better man first. It is undeniable that every permanent improvement of society depends upon the civic virtues of those who hold government positions. And secondly, history teaches that people become more wicked as the standards of living become higher, unless they are at the same time trained to discipline and virtue. To be sure, the needy ones must have bread; however, the most important thing is not to improve the world, but to make man stronger, wiser, and better.

Still more startling is the fact that I owe my retreat from utopianism and my conviction that man, in order to improve, must again feel himself as a sinner, to Nietzsche. Nietzsche preached what was lacking to Spain: "I teach you the superman. Man is something which must be overcome. What have you done to overcome him?" Given a different interpretation, the doctrines of Nietzsche seemed to me similar to the age-old teachings of the Church. Man, the sinner in every one of us, was to be conquered.

The Gospels always impressed me as sublime writings. Since we men of letters are prone to vanity we often flatter ourselves that in our moments of inspiration we could also write passages equal to those of Plato, Shakespeare, or Cervantes. Still, I was always convinced that the literary excellence of the Gospels could never be duplicated. What the Gospels proclaim should be said every moment, but no one has ever spoken it in such language. And moreover, are not the Gospels masterpieces in their simplicity? The literary ideal is not to depict the simplest



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things in a complicated manner, but to say the most difficult things in such simple language as children borrow from their mother. Our Lord speaks to us like a father to his children, He acquaints us with mysteries, prophecies, revelations of His innermost thoughts, either by the use of realistic terms, such as "sword," or by the aid of parables describing the daily work of the husbandman. No one ever wrote with greater accomplishment than the disciples of our Lord.

The literary form, however, is not the only distinction of the Gospels. Man, as portrayed in them, is even of greater significance than the loftiness of expression we find there. In Christ we are shown a prophet, moralist, and seer as nowhere in the literature of the world. In His deeds not only a power far greater than human power reveals itself, but also self-imposed discipline, which has won for Christ the appellation of being "the greatest professor of energy." A single gesture on His part was sufficient to drive the vendors from the temple. All through the story of the passion we feel that Christ could have dispatched Pilate, Herod, and Caiphas, if He had so desired. But He practises moderation because He had not come into the world to manifest His power, but His love. This power which we are made ever conscious of in reading the Gospels has been displayed wonderfully in the Portico de la Gloria of the Cathedral of Santiago. Could there be a better school of harnessing energy, of practising continual self-control, than the school of the Divine Master?

Already convinced that the moral pattern of man must be sought in the Gospels I once strolled through the streets of London when I espied on the façade of a Protestant church the inscription: All foreigners are welcome. Twenty-five years have passed since I read this inscription, but I am still shocked by it. The presumption contained in the inscription that one could be a "foreigner"

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in a house of prayer was so repugnant to me that I could not get it off my mind. Of course I knew that the invitation was well meant, but it would never occur to a Spaniard to invite "foreigners" or "strangers" to church, for the cathedral of Burgos would not admit such a distinction among the worshipers.

Some years later my historical knowledge was enlarged by the assertion that the discovery of America by the Spaniards had been motivated by the belief that the people of the unknown countries, which we tried to contact could be converted and saved just as we. Likewise Francisco de Vitoria founded international law because he made the homogeneity of man the foundation of jurisprudence. When the second General of the Society of Jesus, Lainez, succeeded in having the teaching of the *iustitia imputata*, which the Augustinian Seripando advocated, rejected at the Council of Trent, he followed his sincere conviction that the means of justification which our Lord merited for us are adequate for all people who wish to use them. Not long ago Father Gonzales Arintero, the greatest of our mystical writers, wrote: "There is no teaching in theology which has a better foundation than the teaching that all without exception receive — *proxime* or *remote* — sufficient grace for salvation." It was, therefore, traditional Spanish Catholicism which revolted in me at the thought of anyone being considered a "stranger" in a church. Though I was not familiar with this teaching at that time, I instinctively reacted as every Spaniard would have done under similar circumstances.

During those years I struck up a closer acquaintance with people whose pursuits were similar to those of mine. Some of these influenced me greatly. T. H. Hulme, who died in the World War, gained publicity as a student in Cambridge by asserting in a lecture that the romantics were people who denied original sin, who portrayed men as imprisoned kings who would regain their thrones



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if their liberty were restored. He taught that art and reason had become unproductive only through naturalism and subjectivism, and that it would take much discussion in order to reinstate the Christian principles in literature, philosophy, and moral theology. He was an enthusiastic follower of the ethical teaching of Mr. G. E. Moore, because he emphasized the objectivity of what is good in contrast to the relativity of the modernists. However, Hulme did not so much influence me by his ideas as rather by his whole behavior. Three times he went as a volunteer to war, was wounded in action and, later on, killed. By his example he taught me that to revere the state and to show heroism are virtues, a manifestation of love and intelligence, by which man raises himself above the weaknesses of the flesh.

The architect G. Arthur Penty, who after William Morris did more than anyone else to popularize the guilds and the spirit of the Middle Ages, taught me the necessity of the rule of the spirit over the crazy cult of the machine, on which our moderns place their hope for the betterment of the future. Baron von Huegel, who introduced me into the London Society for the Study of Religion, showed me the possibility of being tolerant while possessed of a deep religious fervor at the same time. The members met once a month and discussed, each according to his belief, some question of theology. About half of the members were Jews, the rest Catholics, Anglicans, and dissidents. Usually Baron von Huegel led the discussion and, taking the point of view of the speaker, he showed the plausibility of his arguments. Then he immediately proceeded to show the weak points of the argument and the necessity of a more comprehensive view and usually ended up by saying that everything was already contained more harmoniously and perfectly in the Catholic Church. He seemed like an inexhaustible source of wisdom, of an ardent love and a burning faith.

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In those years I tried to explain to myself the fundamental dogmas of our religion. I did this not in order to understand the mysteries, for this would have been a ludicrous undertaking, but according to the advice of Pascal, to clarify my own outlook on life by means of these mysteries. In the study of philosophy I found that the authors disagree as to the advantage or disadvantage of the deductive or inductive method, the historic or genetic, the axiologic or valorative, and I came to the conclusion that all three, though inseparable, are equally necessary and indispensable. We study philosophy because it is of value to man. However, in order to evaluate a philosophy its delimitation from other sciences must be clear. Likewise the motives which compel people to study, as well as the problems of science, grow historically. Consequently it was evident that the historic existence of the contents of the spirit is inseparably united with their essence and value. This constituted my first approach to the mystery of the Blessed Trinity.

As soon as I ordered my system of values I discovered that all values which man recognizes may be grouped into three divisions: power, wisdom, and love, because these three include all esthetic values. An analysis of these three groups showed me that though they are easily distinguishable, they nevertheless belong inseparably together. Power, for example, must include power to understand and to love, for a power which would ally itself with ignorance or hatred would destroy itself. The same thing must be assumed of wisdom and love. God, therefore, the absolute Good, constitutes the perfect unity of power, wisdom, and love. It is significant that Dante placed this inscription over the portals of Hell:

*Fecemi la suprema postestate,  
La somma sapienza, il primo amore.*

Supreme Power gave me existence,  
Most sublime Wisdom and primeval Love.



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When, therefore, the writings of Arintero taught me that the Father was the personification of power, the Son of wisdom, the Holy Ghost of love, and that the sins of weakness were in a special way directed against the Father, those of ignorance against the Son, and those of malice against the Holy Ghost, I saw that my reasoning would have led me to the same conclusions.

Not reflections of a spiritual nature brought me to the veneration of the Blessed Mother, but the feelings of my heart. I was always of the opinion that it was quite natural for the incarnation to be prepared by the selection of a Virgin conceived without original sin. Still the urge to pray to her was not the result of such reflections, but of my deep emotions. When our passions unavoidably bring us the grief of disappointment we need an inspiration and consolation in order to rise again and take new courage. In such cases nothing can be compared with the influence which a shining ideal exercises over us. With me it was perhaps an unconscious yearning for the "White Virgin," the patroness of my home-town Vitoria, whom I fervently venerated in my youth. She reminds us of the great ethical beauty of our spirit and redeems us with the knowledge that we also belong to her; she does not permit us to fall without chiding us and filling us with shame at our weakness; she strengthens us in our reverence for the ideal, and finally, in the hour of death, she comes to us, if we remained faithful, and closes our eyes and gives us the kiss of peace. If we consider of what significance a woman is, who is the embodiment of purity, we understand more readily what the veneration of the Blessed Virgin means to strong men as the sailors and soldiers of old Spain: a shield against the passions which dethrone the spirit and lead to degeneration. As a protective measure against such debasement the *Salve Regina* originated in Spain a thousand years ago and there is no prayer sweeter than it on the lips of man.

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The question of miracles did not concern me greatly for I lived in a time which already rejected the extreme determinism in nature. For a reasoning man, the whole world is full of miracles. Life is a miracle, or at least an eternal mystery. The soul is a miracle and Truth a still greater one. The fact that we can convey our thoughts, that other people interpret signs on paper the same as we do may seem perfectly natural, but is nevertheless quite mysterious. If anyone admits the daily experience of such inexplicable facts he will have little difficulty in assuming that God can let individuals share in His omnipotence that they may manifest His power through miracles.

Another thing which occupied my mind most is the unerring surety of the Church in matters of morals, even though at times the leadership was in the hands of men who were not free from the influence of strong passions. In his main work *The Development and Vitality of the Church* P. Arinterro showed me that this could only be explained by the infallible guidance of the Holy Ghost, who according to time and circumstances, adequately enlightens those whom Christ commissioned to teach. The teaching body of the Church, ever alert on the watchtower of the Kingdom of Christ, this standing proof of the reality of the supernatural, this guardian of good morals, constitutes the best guarantee for peace, happiness, and progress of the state. For it is she who is solicitous that among all classes and regions the spirit of law shall prevail. It is she who anoints the kings and reminds them of their duty to protect the hapless. And thus the state obtains a power which at the same time circumscribes its ambitions. Besides it becomes a sort of charismatic aureola, with the effect that its authority is recognized.

The Church not only establishes law and order by suppressing the evil inclinations of man, but also furthers every progress by encouraging his noble aspirations. By the bonds of charity she governs the relations between the



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rulers and their subjects and thus produces in human society that harmonious unity which is the secret of her power and endurance. To be sure, other religions may serve the state as the Catholic Church, but the Catholic Church alone does not serve the state without at the same time subjecting it to a higher ideal than national egotism. Therefore there has never been a state which has had better citizens than the old Spanish monarchy, at least as long as she remained true to her mission. As soon as the belief grew that Spain had sacrificed too much for the Church, there arose at the same time Spaniards who were of the opinion that too much had been done for Spain and the monarchy.

This brings us back to Spain with which our story began and whose final analysis proves that my country lost its way as soon as it divorced itself from the Church. It will never find its happiness again unless it allies itself with the Church, as far as this is possible. It cannot be denied that Spain spent itself for the Church during the time of the Counter-Reformation, but this is its glory and not its downfall. God repays His servants a hundredfold and He had already given us for our loyal service the greatest empire of the world. And if we lost it after dedicating ourselves previously for fifty years to the ideals of the Encyclopedists, we must look for the true cause of our decline in the fact that we had actually long ceased to be a Catholic monarchy and had patterned our country after the worldly regimes of other European nations.

Repeatedly during life, and especially during my sojourn in foreign countries, I was often fearful that I might be remiss in my duties to my country. This it was which induced me to return to Spain after I had already gained a name for myself abroad. Now, however, my conscience reproaches me that perhaps I am not as zealous in guarding the interests of religion as those of my country, but I am consoled by the thought that I have discov-

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ered the interests of Spain and of the Catholic Church to be in conformity with each other. Love for Spain and my preoccupation with the causes of its decline, let me find the source of its great past in its deep religiousness. At the same time I discovered this faith to be reasonable and acceptable. It is not only compatible with culture and progress, but it is their abiding inspiration and impulse. This realization has made me a better Catholic and one more capable of serving his country.



## MELLOWED BY BEREAVEMENT

PROFESSOR DR. EVERARDO BACKHEUSER

REARED in a Catholic family where religious life was at a low ebb, I did not, like others, receive my First Holy Communion in my childhood days. Only after a lapse of fifty years was I privileged to approach the Altar.

Still, as a child, I was pious to a certain extent, a fact that is evident from many incidents. I remained thus till I began attending high school. Till my twelfth year I never went to school without first saying a prayer in a neighboring church. Nor was it the force of habit that prompted me to pray, but a pious and genuine urge. And yet, despite this practice, it was the high school, whose threshold I crossed with God in my mind, that finally robbed me of my faith.

I attended high school shortly after the proclamation of the republic, from 1890-96, at a time when atheism was rampant and the teachers delighted in posing as unbelievers and in ridiculing Catholicism. The Kant-Laplace theory was propounded to our immature minds in a manner distinctly calculated to engender doubts in us regarding the divine origin of the world. This work of destruction, begun by the professor of geography, was continued in physics and chemistry classes, and completed by the method in which the theories of Lamarck and Darwin were presented to us in zoology and botany. I entirely lost my faith. By the time I received my degree of Bachelor of Arts I was a confirmed atheist.

Imbued with this spirit of materialism and atheism, I

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later took over the chair for mineralogy and geology at the Polytechnical High School. Here in turn I sowed the seeds of materialism in my class periods and in my personal contact with the students. All the evil my teachers had done me with their deceptive theories I irresponsibly passed on to others and almost eagerly distilled the drops of poison into the hearts of my students.

I remained a full-fledged materialist until the problems in natural science made me reflective and I began to doubt the value of materialism. A purely materialistic concept of the universe seemed imperfect and faulty. Still, regardless of these flaws of atheism, I rejected off-hand any solutions which proceeded from the existence of God, because such a procedure, I held, was merely begging the question.

After this period of doubt, which lasted for some time, there followed a period when faith seemed desirable. The necessity of faith impressed itself upon me whenever I saw how happy those of my acquaintances were who believed in God. They were not haunted by the doubts which tormented me. Every social and scientific problem became for me a puzzle which could be solved only on the assumption of a final cause. Others were spared this dilemma because they believed in the existence of such a final cause. No matter how long I revolved the problems in my mind, they always ended up with a question mark. On the other hand the scientists possessed of faith found their support in the *causa causarum* — God.

And yet, in spite of my strong desire of believing, I did not receive the gift of faith. I remained an infidel. Then came a day when suddenly I believed in God. How did it come about? Merely by viewing the Bay of Guanabara, the harbor of Rio de Janeiro, which I had seen hundreds of times before.

Soon after the World War I had staged with Father Pedro Sinzig, O.F.M., an exposition of German art.



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Though we differed in matters of faith we were united by a genuine friendship and an endeavor to plead in this way the cause of a downtrodden nation with the citizens of Brazil. One day, on our way to the exposition, which by the way was devoted to ecclesiastical art, I told him that I found it impossible to believe in God despite my burning desire to do so.

"And all this?" queried Father Sinzig, whilst he pointed to the panorama of the magnificent bay, "who do you think made all this?" This argument, which heretofore had made no impression on me, now opened my eyes.

I beheld the bay which I had viewed so often disinterestedly: the placid, blue waters, the contours of the encircling mountain range, the swift sailing boats, the great ocean liners gliding steadily toward the open sea — all this stirred me deeply. I recognized the existence of God. I do not know whether I acknowledged Him at exactly that moment, but I felt His presence, and later on came to the knowledge of Him.

How simple it had been to recognize God! And yet formerly it had been quite impossible. In a single moment my eyes had been opened. I had been cured of blindness instantaneously. How difficult had this process been in times past!

But now, after having followed the path of faith for years, I understand what brought this change about. It was God's grace which came to me, because He had long sought me. A single word from the lips of an apostolic priest was enough to illumine the darkness!

Nevertheless, I was then still far from a real living faith. It was evident to me that God existed. I was convinced of this, so to say, in a philosophical way, but I had no confidence in Him. I did not love Him. The great metamorphosis of my life was to come much later, after five long years.

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One thing, however, had been accomplished. Since that day the lips of the infidel were sealed. I no longer ridiculed the idea of a Supreme Being. At a solemn occasion, before a vast audience, I even made an open profession of my belief in God and sincerely quoted the opening words of the Apostles' Creed: "I believe in God the Father Almighty." This was as far as I sincerely ventured to go. The real meaning of faith had not as yet dawned upon me. This gift came to me much later in the hour of great affliction.

This event brought the decision, and I cannot mention anything by which I could have merited that undeserved grace of God. For it was not as a result of my prayers that God turned to me. I repeat, it was not I who was instrumental in opening the floodgate of God's grace, but rather the fervent entreaties of my wife who I trust came to the vision of God on the day of her death in Dresden, July 3, 1928.

By way of an explanation I must state that my wife, Richarda Restier Backheuser, had a strong and burning faith. Her deepest sorrow and cross was my unbelief, which from being aggressive and intolerant in the beginning, gradually mellowed and even went so far as not to oppose the hanging of a picture of the Last Supper in our dining room. Richarda was overjoyed when she became aware that the atheist professed his belief in God, but to her great regret she soon realized that this was quite as far as I had gone. Though she multiplied her prayers and made her vows to God, I resisted with full knowledge, for I wanted no more than merely to believe in God, convinced that I had already made great headway on the path of faith. At the same time I persevered in my aversion to Catholic priests and practices, which had never been explained to me. All I wanted was to believe in God. No more.

For the information of the reader I must mention that



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the rapid increase of divorce, witnessed by me in Germany during my last visit to that country had genuinely alarmed me. For comparatively insignificant reasons married couples decided upon separation, in consequence of which the disruption of family life followed in the wake. Moreover, it was sad to behold how courtships frequently led to illegitimate relations among young people. I was shocked by my observations and told my wife, who was very pleased with my assurance that upon my return to Brazil I would not only write against the evil of divorce but would also advocate religious instructions in public schools, as an indispensable means for morally strengthening society.

Such were my religious convictions at the time of the sudden death of my beloved wife, which was accompanied by extraordinary circumstances. All these depressing events were directed by Divine Providence in such a way that the salvation of my soul might not encounter any resistance on my part. The incident referred to happened as follows.

On the way to the theater my wife was accidentally felled by a boy riding a bicycle. As a result she suffered several bone fractures. Her cry of agony still rings in my ear. But after voicing her feelings she immediately grew composed and resigned to such an extent that she tried to raise the hand of the boy, who had been seized by the crowd, to her lips. The long days spent in the hospital found her resigned to God's will.

During this confinement in bed her greatest grief was her inability to receive the sacraments. One day, however, when I called on her, she told me with much joy that she would be able to receive again. Through the medium of a Sister she had succeeded in making her request to a foreign priest who chanced to spend a few days in the hospital. This priest, fortunately, spoke French and thus Richarda, who had no command of

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German, could make her confession. She received Holy Communion after begging me to kneel at her side during the holy functions. I complied with her wish and knelt again for the first time after forty years of unbelief before Christ in the Blessed Sacrament.

Two days later my dear and faithful wife, who had proven her loyalty for so many years, succumbed to a heart attack. She passed away unexpectedly. A sudden death, which can also overtake people in the state of mortal sin, is dreaded by Catholics. This time, however, death was not dreadful because it came when the patient by a wonderful concatenation of events was in full possession of sanctifying grace, as we have every reason to believe.

And then the unbelievable happened.

The body of my wife was taken into a vault in the cemetery of Dresden till it could be transferred to Brazil. The obsequies, which took place of a late evening and during a heavy rain, made my spirits droop. Worries of a financial nature, which augmented my inner grief, made me feel very exhausted. Upon my return from the cemetery I fell into a profound slumber.

The following morning, however, a strange occurrence took place in the very same room of the hotel from whence my wife had gone forth on the day of the accident. It was a bright morning when I awoke and began a conversation with my son, who was 24 years of age and shared the room with me. Naturally we spoke about that which affected both of us, the death of Richarda and the transfer of her remains to Rio de Janeiro.

Suddenly I spied in a sunlit corner of the room a strange formation as of clouds which changed into a smiling likeness of Richarda. On her shoulder rested the hand of the Heavenly Father, as He is depicted in some school Bibles, venerable looking, with a flowing white beard. I was captivated by the vision. Richarda smiled



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blissfully under the protecting hand of God. It is impossible for me to say how many minutes this apparition lasted. I only know that I suddenly interrupted the conversation with my son and stared spellbound at my smiling Nêne, as I was wont to call her affectionately.

My son, who thought I had become mentally deranged, called to me: "Father, what is happening to you?" I motioned to him to remain silent and said: "I see mother in God's hands."

These were moments of inexpressible joy which I shall never forget. If I were a painter I should be able to depict the vision, so vividly it still lives in my memory. I saw my wife as clearly as I saw all the other objects in the room: the bed, the door, and the vase on the table. My senses were functioning normally. In fact I had been engaged in a conversation with my boy and was by no means in a stupor.

The apparition stirred me to the depths of my soul. In the same moment I had the desire to believe. And I believed. I felt a burning desire to confess my sins, I who had always been so proud and conceited. I tarried no longer and went to confession the very same day.

After this experience there followed moments and days and weeks when I had to cope renewedly with the enemy of the human race. During the long sea voyage all the doubts of my materialistic past assailed me time and again. Though I sincerely wished to cling to Catholic teachings, I nevertheless doubted everything and understood as much as nothing. It is true that I rejected nothing, but neither did I accept anything conclusively. Thus the struggle began anew.

Would I ever accept Catholicism with all its implications? The Sacraments? Would I ever become a member of the Church militant? Such and similar questions perturbed my mind till our arrival in Rio de Janeiro. The necessity of a personal talk with a priest, who could solve

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my doubts, became increasingly evident. I wished to attain certainty before the body of Richarda was interred. But to which priest should I take recourse? Father Pedro, who had restored my faith in God, was absent. To whom was I to go?

Immediately after our arrival in Rio I spoke to two of my good Catholic friends of my perplexity of mind. They referred me to Father Franca, on whom I might call at the monastery the following day. I decided to call on this priest when another strange coincidence turned the tide of affairs.

For a long time my wife had a very wise, kind, and highly educated priest as a confessor, Father Gaston de Veiga. Time and again she suggested that I bring my doubts before this priest and seek his advice. I rejected her proposition, whereupon she jokingly remarked: "I bet that you will some day make your confession to Father Veiga."

Strange as it may seem, I met Father Veiga just as I turned away from the bier of my wife in order to call on Father Franca. He had entered the room unnoticed and suddenly I, who had thought him far away in Sao Paolo, saw him face to face. He had come to convey his sympathy to me at the great loss sustained.

Then and there I made up my mind to talk things over and unburden my soul. In a private room I freely discussed with Father all my spiritual difficulties: my doubts, misgivings, and indecision, everything which baffled my reasoning powers. But I also told him what was drawing me to God and His Church: the apparition, the moral grace of the faithful and their patience in suffering. Nothing remained unsaid. I bared my innermost soul humbly and contritely.

On the afternoon of the same day Father Veiga led me to the confessional, and on the following day I received Holy Communion, next to the body of my wife



who had delivered me by her prayers from unbelief. It was my First Holy Communion, which I received July 26, 1928, in my forty-ninth year.

My conversion had become an accomplished fact.

God had condescended to hearken to my humble pleadings. By and by I had begun to comprehend the divine truths, or rather God's grace enlightened me for their understanding. Now everything seemed so plausible to me and I wondered that I had ever found it difficult to accept the teachings of the Church. The infallibility of the Pope, the Immaculate Conception, the veneration of the saints, all these beliefs came natural to me under the converting influence of grace.

After I cooperated with God's grace it seemed as if a veil had been taken from my eyes and a new world revealed itself to me. I would like to emphasize that I read neither apologetical works nor the Scriptures. Neither did I ask anyone for an explanation, except for a single case regarding the Divinity of Christ. Everything came, as it were, by itself, in those long hours of loneliness when I sought myself. I prayed to God for light and, when I expected it least, the gift of faith was mine.

My spiritual development had various phases:

1. Till my thirteenth year I was possessed of a deep faith in God and His saints, though professing no definite form of religion.

2. From 13 till 42 my life was steeped in materialism, which at first increased and gradually gave room to doubts and the desire to believe.

3. At 44 I accepted the existence of God as the *causa causarum* of the visible world.

4. At 49 followed my voluntary acceptance of the Catholic Faith, which came to me through the prayers of my wife and my humble petitions. A humble and sincere prayer at the feet of God seems to me the best means of accomplishing everything.

### *Mellowed By Bereavement*

To the present day I have received everything I reasonably asked for my beloved ones or myself, not by formulated prayers, but by heart-to-heart talks with my Saviour.



## A REFUGEE FINDS A HAVEN

PROFESSOR DR. IVAN PUZYNA

IT IS an extremely difficult task to describe one's conversion to the Catholic Church. In the first place a conversion is the work of God's grace, and secondly, it is nigh impossible to clothe the supernatural in the garment of human words. Besides a religious conversion is always a culmination of the spiritual development of a person. For this reason the attempt to describe my spiritual advancement within the allotted space almost seems like a futile undertaking. Nevertheless I shall make the attempt in the hope of benefiting my fellow men.

I begin with childhood days. A deep spirit of faith and piety animated my parents who were members of the Russian Orthodox church. My mother in particular was very pious. Every evening I saw her praying for hours. Frequently she took me along to the cemetery where one of my sisters, Tanja by name, lies buried. Tanja died at the tender age of 16. She had been a good and dearly beloved girl, and my parents could never forget her. Only their belief in Christ gave them strength to bear up under this bereavement. I was only six years old at the time that Tanja died, but my sister always remained near and dear to me. More than once, and sometimes in quite hopeless situations, I experienced her assistance from on high.

It was on a beautiful day in autumn that the Catholic truth of the unity in faith dawned upon me for the first time. It was during divine services, when I was about

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twelve years old. Bright sunlight filtered through the glass-stained windows and the priest recited the prayer: "Let us pray for the union of all." This prayer with which I was well familiar gripped me this time more than ever. But many years passed before I myself followed the heavenly injunction contained therein.

In the year 1913 I took my master's degree at the University of Petersburg. Having matriculated with the historic-philological faculty I had a predilection for the history of the Middle Ages and the Renaissance. In the so-called Seminary, under the direction of a professor, we tried to understand the spirit and accomplishments of the Middle Ages. The *Confessions* of St. Augustine as well as his treatise *De Civitate Dei* also impressed me profoundly. I likewise perused with special interest the book of Paul Sabatier on St. Francis and it did not take long before this Saint became the great love of my life. I have held fast to this to the present day.

According to Russian custom the university dismissed me for two years in order to afford me an opportunity to perfect my knowledge in a foreign country, and to prepare my dissertation. I chose Rome as my field of activity and temporary abode, though this choice, in view of my studies which concerned the times of the Medici, was not the happiest. But Rome, which I entered at the beginning of 1914, had attracted me irresistibly. It is impossible for me to describe what impression the eternal city made on me.

I roamed amid the ruins of antiquity which proclaimed the fame of ancient Rome, and seemed as if under a spell. What still more impressed me, however, were the historic remains of the first Christian centuries. The blood of martyrs seemed more precious to me than all the grandeur of the Caesars. Everywhere I witnessed the triumph of the cross. Rome bore the stamp of ages, but it was the spirit of Christianity which ever and anon



created works of inimitable beauty: churches and palaces, paintings and monuments, valuable collections of books, etc. Truly a city, I mused, which was predestined to proclaim the glory of Christ. The altar in the Forum Romanum dedicated to the *Deo ignoto*, "the unknown God," also impressed me profoundly. This unknown God of the god-fearing pagans was our God and King, Jesus Christ, and Rome was the center of His kingdom on earth. Was this already a Catholic thought? Soon I was to become still more familiar with Catholic ideas.

In Rome there also lived a compatriot of mine, Vladimir Zabughin. Though our fathers had been friends I was not personally acquainted with him. However, we specialized in the same studies: the Italian Renaissance. Zabughin was the first Russian Catholic, i.e., a Catholic of the oriental rite, whom I got to know. We frequently made excursions into the suburbs and visited also the monastery of Grotta-Ferrata, which had retained the oriental rite with the Greek language. Services in Grotta-Ferrata during Holy Week, 1914, proved a great experience for me. I further visited quite frequently the Russian Catholic chapel San Lorenzo, where Zabughin took part in the liturgical functions as deacon every Sunday. Moreover the large library of Zabughin, with works of Catholic authors, was wholly at my disposal. I relished in particular at this time the writings of the great Russian convert Vladimir Solovjev.

The good impressions which were imparted to me by the Catholicism of Zabughin were somewhat warped by a resident Russian Catholic priest whose many negative qualities repelled me. Still these unfavorable impressions were not the only cause why I hesitated to embrace the Catholic Faith in 1914. It was rather the conviction that I, as a member of the Orthodox church, belonged to the true Church of Christ. It is true that the organization of my church seemed less perfect than that of the Roman

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Catholic Church, nevertheless she had in my opinion all the characteristics of the true church of Christ inasmuch as she had all the Sacraments and taught no heresy. I, therefore, believed, that I could also be saved within her fold. However, still another thought occupied me at that time. If the organization of the Orthodox church seemed imperfect to me, I considered it my personal obligation to work for the abolition of this drawback by advocating a reunion of churches.

The outbreak of the World War and the resulting problems for a long time repressed within me all thoughts of a reunion. Later on the terror and worries of the Russian civil war and the Bolshevik revolution kept my mind from spiritual things. This does not mean that the revolution and Bolshevism deadened my religious fervor. On the contrary, I visited the church more than ever and nothing succeeded in shaking my faith. The whole conflict seemed simple to me: Bolshevism was the enemy; the suffering church, the work of God.

Toward the end of the year 1919 affairs had taken such a turn for the worse that I saw no possibility of staying longer under the Soviet rule. Consequently I persuaded the other family members to escape with me from the country. Long weeks of anxious suspense lay ahead of us before our plans materialized. It is impossible to enumerate all the details of this disquieting adventure. A few things, however, I cannot pass over in silence.

Our family was divided into two groups. My brother and I joined four Finnish smugglers who had fled from the Bolshevik prisons and intended to return over the frozen gulf to Finland. My wife, as well as my brother and sister-in-law, was to follow later on by sled. One of the men was hired to fetch them; a service for which he received much money, indeed, all our valuables. The flight from Petersburg to Finland which took place on the night of the twelfth to the thirteenth of February,



1920, was an ordeal for me, unaccustomed as I was to physical exertion. The many falls, due to the slippery ice, were extremely painful. Still we had to push onward because the life of my beloved ones depended upon the outcome of this enterprise.

Farther and farther we went. Wherever we spied a Bolshevik sentinel we had to redouble our speed. But in these harrowing hours of peril something wonderful happened. I suddenly spied two bright figures walking, or rather gliding, at my right side. Their presence was a help and consolation for me in my agony. But who were they? I put this question to my brother who walked at my left, but he saw nobody save the figures of the four smugglers who preceded us. I myself, however, observed the two figures, which walked shoulder to shoulder next to me, for a long time.

Nor was this the only inexplicable happening during our flight. My brother fell less often than I, but at one of his falls he struck his head so violently on the ice that he became unconscious. I then asked the leader of the men we had hired to slacken his pace, but he responded that the particular location was very dangerous and all must hurry as fast as possible. Saying this he and his colleagues rapidly outdistanced us and it but remained for me to take my brother on my shoulders and so to follow the smugglers. And what happened? I fell no longer. For a full hour, during which I carried my heavy burden I did not slip a single time. The scope and purpose of this article do not permit me to recount all the incidents and strange happenings of my flight and that of my family. This particular adventure, however, was in my estimation a veritable miracle and we praised God's goodness which delivered us from the maw of death.

The gathering place of all Russian refugees who passed the Finnish border was Terrijoki. For a time my

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wife and I also remained in Terrijoki, where we found lodging in the house of the pastor with whom I subsequently came to be on very friendly terms. It was he who proposed and carried through with the city council my appointment as director of the city high school. I became greatly devoted to my new calling, to which I gave all my time and energy, and thus spent one year and a half in the religious and moral training of the students of Terrijoki. But in particular I was interested in teaching the history of the early Church and the life of Jesus Christ.

During my stay in Terrijoki I had occasion also to read the latest publications of Harnack and other Protestant writers. These supplied me with many isolated facts, but seemed erroneous and noxious in their concept of the Church. During conversations with the pastor I did not fail to express freely my views on church problems and church unity. The pastor, though otherwise a very educated man, knew little about the Catholic Church. In reply to my expositions he handed me a book from his library. It was a pamphlet of the worst kind, whose crude arguments impressed me very unfavorably.

When I came to Germany, in 1922, religious problems apart from my specific historic pursuits roused my interest in a special manner. A number of Protestant writers influenced me profoundly. This was true especially in regard to the latest work of Harnack, which discussed the teaching of Marcion. This exposition was intended to offer an explanation for the historic happenings of which I had been an eyewitness. After perusing the work I gathered from it the concept that Bolshevism was the work of Satan and that the rest of the world which entered into a pact with it was equally wicked. Marcion taught: "The whole world is the work of a cruel being, the kingdom of Christ is of another make." I ventured more deeply into this kind of mysticism, and





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followed also with great interest all that I found relating to Christian, Mohammedan, and Buddhistic Mysticism. In this way my conception of religion became partly individualistic and partly universal; individualistic insofar as I took a personal view of religion, and universal, inasmuch as this mysticism exhibited some traits common to all religions. At this time I wrote on the religious philosophy of Marsilio Ficino of Florence.

Soon, however, I became aware of the dangers lurking in such false mysticism, for a subjective conception of religion threatened to undermine my religious practices. Was this not the sin of the Reformation? Was it not the spirit of Protestant theology, which influenced me? I became alert, and in order to understand better the essence and spirit of the Reformation I began studying the life of Martin Luther. This soon convinced me that Dr. Eck was closer to the truth than Luther. The circuitous route thus followed finally led me closer to the Catholic conception of the Church.

In the year 1923 more Russian emigrants arrived in Berlin. They were mostly professors whose outlook on life did not correspond to the Marxian philosophy. Among them was a Russian Catholic named Kusmin Karawayew. I recalled a student by the same name who had been with me at the time of my studies at the University of Petersburg and who was known as a dyed-in-the-wool Bolshevik. I was therefore all the more surprised when I learned that Kusmin Karawayew had broken with the Komintern and had not only become a Catholic, but also suffered for his faith in the Soviet prisons. Before long we became good friends. The idea of a reunion in faith had also taken possession of him and we founded a society for the purpose of promulgating this idea which should unite Catholics and Orthodox in one Church. Unfortunately, a few months later we were forced to separate.



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Bishop Tychon, the head of the Orthodox community in Berlin, whom I acquainted with my Catholic tendencies, did not commit himself. He merely made me pledge myself not to quit the Orthodox church before the lapse of three years. This promise, which I also made to my confessor, I kept. My arguments in favor of the Catholic Church were founded on the Gospel, on the teaching of the unity of the Church of Christ, and the supremacy of Peter.

At the suggestion of Bishop Tychon, and in obedience to him, I even challenged Kusmin Karawayew in a public meeting at which he defended the unity of the Church of Christ. Contrary to his exposition, I maintained that Orthodoxy constituted the "spiritual garment" of the Russian people. My retort was greeted with universal applause. Personally, however, I was disgusted with my own dialectic and left the hall without awaiting the reply of Kusmin Karawayew. Deep down in my heart I knew that he was right and not I, in spite of the applause of the audience.

The following three years proved disconsolate ones for me. My soul was homesick for the Catholic Church, but my promise resulted in keeping me from her. There followed in consequence a reaction against everything religious, a condition which lasted for several years. Since I believed that I might not follow the promptings of my heart I did not care to occupy myself at all with religious problems. But even during these dismal times Divine Providence did not forsake me. Through my sister I made the acquaintance of Professor Dr. Berg, the Catholic chaplain for Russian refugees. Professor Berg gave my poor countrymen every possible assistance and this charity toward us Orthodox made a deep impression on me. The great charitable organization of the German Catholics in behalf of the Orthodox showed me one field of activity of the Catholic Church which displays a com-

passionate heart to all humanity. But how long would I continue to resist God's grace? The last impulse to my conversion was an occurrence within the Russian Orthodox church.

In autumn of the year 1927 the acting Patriarch and Primate of the Russian Orthodox church, Bishop Sergius, issued a proclamation in which he identified the cause of Bolshevism with the cause of the Russian Orthodox church. This was terrible. The Bolsheviks were fighting the Church of Christ, for atheism is an essential part of Communism. What was to be done? Many Orthodox Russians broke with the Patriarchal church and formed autonomous communities. Others claimed that the proclamation had been issued under force. Nevertheless, I could not accept this declaration, for Bishop Sergius was undoubtedly the legitimate head of the Russian Orthodox church. It was likewise undeniable that no power would ever prevail against the Church, that is, the true Church of Christ. I, therefore, sought the true and invincible Church of which the Gospel speaks. My decision was soon made. On an evening I received the full text of the proclamation of the Metropolitan Sergius and the following morning I told my wife that I would leave the Orthodox church and become a Catholic.

It was easy to make this resolution, but a restless night followed. I felt sad at the thought of breaking with a church to which fondest memories linked me. Several weeks passed before I was received into the Catholic Church. The weeks prior to my reception were unhappy ones. However, God did not leave me without consolation. One day when my wife came home from shopping I found an article on Therese Neumann in a newspaper which had been used for wrapping purposes. I read about Therese Neumann for the first time. A reference to the favorite book of Therese dealing with the life of



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"The Little Flower" roused my interest. On the night of the same day I asked a priest for this autobiography which he promised to procure for me. Imagine my wonderment when a picture of St. Therese fell from a book which I took from the priest's library. The next morn I got the desired book and spent the following days praying to St. Therese, who has since then remained in my heart and home.

On October 15, 1927, the feast day of the great St. Theresa of Avila, I became a Catholic of the oriental rite. According to my observations it rarely happens that a convert from the Russian Orthodox church relinquishes the beautiful oriental rite, the prayers and piety peculiar to the oriental churches. I remain a sincere Oriental, and my acception of the Catholic Faith is not a condemnation of my orthodox past, but rather a correction and completion of the same.

What, finally, is the meaning and value of my conversion? Luke says that man lives by every word that proceedeth from the mouth of God. I have heard the word of God concerning the unity of the Church and have rendered obedience to it. I am convinced that a man who accepts the word of God will also recognize His law and follow it. Thus in my spiritual life my conversion is not the last but the first step on the road to the supreme goal, our eternal salvation.

## AN ARGUMENT FROM HISTORY

PRINCE DIMITRI GALITZIN

MANY Russians ask me why I became a Catholic and disavowed the faith of my parents and ancestors. They say: "It is a disgrace for a member of the Galitzin family to act thus since our ancestors emigrated to Russia because they refused to remain in a country which was under the sway of Rome."

History relates how my direct ancestor, Prince Patrikei of Zwenigorod, and his sons entered the service of the grand duke of Moscow in 1408. This he did undoubtedly because service in Moscow made it easier for him to preserve the Orthodox faith for himself and his children.

I myself was born in the Russian Orthodox church and, though as a child I had been religious, I did not actually interest myself until later in the differences between the various religions. In studying the history of my country and that of my ancestral lineage, however, I made the discovery that many of my relatives had become converts to the Catholic Church. This caused me to make the following reflections.

Russia became a major power and waxed stronger in proportion as the idea of autocracy took hold of the nation. Simultaneously, Orthodoxy grew stronger. Detailed proofs of this may be found in the works of Zabujni, of Prince August Galitzin, of Professor von Taube, and others. For the present, however, I would like to show the traditional attitude of the Russians toward the Cath-



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olic Church, which throws a glaring light on Russian despotism.

The biography on Prince Dimitri Augustin Galitzin, alias Father Smith, Catholic missionary in the United States of America, which was written by Prince Gagarine, contains the following words: "The prince was born and reared in the Greek schism and was heir to all those strange prejudices which are caused by pride and ignorance, passed on by the force of habit, which induces despotism to take the place of God and His representatives. . . ." This spirit of despotism and absolutism is a trait of Russian history.

Czar Michael Feodorovitch, as well as Czar Alexei Mikhailovitch, was biased against Rome. They could not forget the attempt of the Russian aristocracy, headed by the metropolitan Filaret, the father of the first monarch of the house of Romanoff, to elevate the Catholic Polish Prince Wladislaw to the Russian throne. This restless period of our history was still vividly in their minds.

Then came the reign of the Czarina Sophia. We were taught that she was a selfish and arrogant woman who, in defiance of all laws, prevented the legitimate successor to the throne, Peter, from ruling Russia. According to historical records, however, the Czarina was actually different. In order to get the true story of this regent one must delve into the earliest historical documents. These prove conclusively that the Czarina Sophia was a highly educated and noble woman. With the aid of her counselor, Prince Wassilij Galitzin, and the Russian aristocracy she planned to Europeanize Russia peacefully, and not, as unfortunately was done later, by foreign adventurers, with the knout, and by the abolition of the Russian aristocracy.

The Czarina and Prince Galitzin also planned to bring about a reunion in faith. The Pope sent the Jesuit Vota

## Prince Dimitri Galitzin

to the Prince in order to negotiate concerning the Holy Alliance against the Turks. Possibly the question of a reunion in faith, which was again brought up later under the reign of the Romanoffs, would have found a happy solution if the Czarina Sophia had ruled longer.

Peter the Great, who by the by was an avowed atheist, was desirous of a reunion for reasons of dynasty. The bulky work of Father Pierling, *Heiligster Thron in Russland*, throws much light on this period. Peter the Great, the oppressor of the Church, was the author of the most illegal institution the world has ever seen. By an edict, dated May 11, 1722, he decreed: "The Holy Synod shall choose a good-hearted officer, who is also brave and acquainted with the administration, and appoint him state supervisor of the Synod."

A return of Russia to the Catholic Church would have been accomplished under the reign of Peter II if the Czar had not died prematurely. It is evident from a collection of manuscripts contained in the Slavic library of Paris, that Princess Irene Dolgorouky, daughter of Prince Peter Galitzin, who acted as Russian ambassador to the court of Vienna, negotiated with representatives of the Pope concerning a reunion in faith. She was converted in the year 1727 at Utrecht and came to Russia during the rule of Peter II, with definite proposals regarding a rapprochement with Rome. A member of the house of Dolgorouky, which was the ruling family at that time, was actually to have been appointed as patriarch of Russia and representative of the Holy Father. The untimely death of the monarch, however, frustrated these plans.

History records what became of the family of Dolgorouky. The following regent, Czarina Anna Joanovna, bitterly persecuted the Church; indeed her hatred was boundless. The very fact that she compelled the convert Prince Mikhail Galitzin (Kwassnik) to assume



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the role of a court jester betrays her attitude toward Catholicism. In the novel *Eishaus*, by Lajetchnikoff, a description is given of the brutal treatment accorded to this true martyr of the faith who, in spite of all chicanery, remained loyal to the Church. It is related that his last prayer was formulated in the words: "My God, grant me as a final favor that the conversions to the true Faith may never cease in our family." Evidently, God heard the prayer of this martyr.

The good relationship existing between the Czar Paul and the Catholic Church is worthy of mention. He realized what a curse absolutism was for the country which made orthodoxy a handmaid of the state, and contemplated a reorganization of the Russian church. He even invited Pope Pius VII to Petersburg when the latter was hard pressed by Napoleon. He also held first rank in the order of Catholic Knights of Malta, which he intended to transplant to Russia. The benevolence of the Czar toward the Jesuits is proven by his words to Father Grubber, who makes mention of them in his letter to Archbishop Marotti of November 23, 1800. The Czar is quoted as saying: "I see no other means of combating irreligion, Illuminism and Jacobinism in our country than by entrusting the education of our youth to the Jesuits. One must begin at a tender age to lay a good foundation, otherwise everything will collapse, not only the faith, but also the government." These words seem prophetic if we view the subsequent development. An interesting occurrence of recent times ought not to be omitted in this connection. The able historian von Baumgarten, at his departure from Russia under the Bolsheviks, received from a member of the Lvov family an emerald enclosing a thorn of the crown of thorns of our Lord. The Czar Paul had always worn this emerald as grand master of the Knights of Malta.

When von Baumgarten returned from Russia to Rome

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Pope Benedict XV mentioned in the course of an audience<sup>1</sup> how gratified he felt that the records of the Vatican archives showed that Czar Paul I had become a Catholic at the end of his life. If Czar Paul had not been assassinated, at the instigation of foreign powers, Russia undoubtedly would have repaired her schism at that time.

Czar Alexander I feared the consequences of revolutionary ideas — which he had himself fostered for a time — especially after the assassination of Kotzebue. He therefore resolved to steer the ship of state into more placid waters. He saw in the union of all churches the best protection against all revolutionary powers. Through his ambassador at the Vatican, Italinski, he submitted a plan to Pope Pius VII with the request to arrange a meeting of the Latin and Russian hierarchy in the neutral city of Venice. In his letter to Italinski the Czar prides himself on being the originator of this plan and mentions the advantages the union would have for the state. He even expresses the desire to visit Rome personally. Unfortunately this undertaking also was doomed because of the ill advice given the Czar by his counsellors.

To what then did the despotic rule over the church eventually lead? Czarism collapsed, and also the church. Even during the mildest period of the Bolshevik revolution the church was helpless because she had been too long under the control of the commissaries of the state such as Protassof, Tschebischew, Tolstoi, Pobedonostzeff, and others. When the almighty state, which had held her, was swept away, the days of the church also were numbered. The Orthodox church offered no such resistance as did the Church of Rome in other countries under similar trying circumstances.

This insight into the history of Russia was the decisive factor in my conversion and received a new impulse in the discovery that many of my ancestors favored a re-

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<sup>1</sup> *Revue de l'Histoire Moderne*, May-June, 1930.



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vival of Catholicism in that country. Some of the members of the house of Galitzin joined the Catholic Church because they realized the cause of the Greek schism and the truth of Catholicism, as did I myself. It was only the absolutism of the state which perpetuated the schism in Russia.

Did not Wassilij, the Dark, exile the metropolitan Isidor for signing the document of reunion in Florence because Wassilij feared a curtailment of his power? Did not Peter, the Great, discard the advice of George I of England because the thought of a diminution of his power seemed unbearable to him? Does not the hatred of the Czarina Anna Joannovna against the Catholic Church prove that a reunion was possible? Moreover, the commissaries of state also, for obvious reasons, did not favor a union of churches.

God, however, ordained otherwise. Those who feared to lose a part of their power lost everything. State absolutism dug its own grave. The Russian people avoided the Catholic Church not only because of ignorance and indifference, but also because of fear of persecution in the event of conversion.

After contemplating these facts and realizing that many of my ancestors and relatives served the Catholic Church faithfully I likewise became desirous of becoming a Catholic.

## AN ADMIRAL TAKES HIS BEARINGS

ADMIRAL SHINJIRO STEFANO YAMAMOTO

ALL grace comes from Almighty God. This is a truth we have learned from our Catechism and which corresponds with my own innermost conviction. If it is true that every conversion is a manifestation of divine grace. I must confess that a retrospective glance over my past life will bear witness to this truth.

I was born on December 22, 1877, and attended the grammar school of Katase where our ancestral home lies, a good hour's train ride from Tokyo. When I reached the age of thirteen I thought: My father has plenty of money; he will send me to Tokyo to attend high school there; later on I shall become a minister, or perhaps a general. I was inspired, namely, with the same ambition that animated the rising generation at the beginning of the Meiji regime in 1868, when the world belonged to the brave.

So I kept on dinning into my father's ears a plea for a chance at a school in Tokyo. However, he was dead against it. For one reason, no doubt, because I was an unruly creature who prided himself on the great esteem his father enjoyed among the village folk and would not refrain from mischief. My playmates fared badly with me. Many a time I provoked them to tears and played unpleasant tricks on our neighbors, till they gave me a good jacketing and remonstrated with my father. Instead of going to school I played truant and roamed about in the thickets and forests. Paternal advice was of no avail.



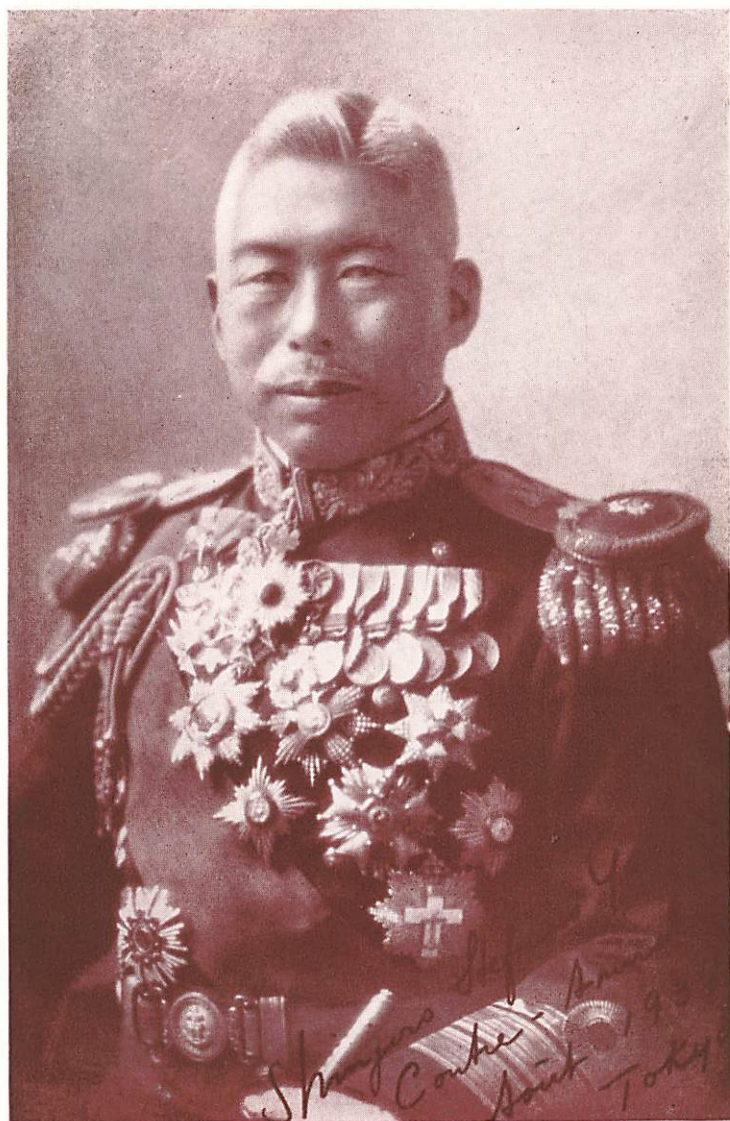
## *An Admiral Takes His Bearings*

The upshot of the matter finally was that my father took recourse to a bamboo cane in order to restore normalcy of action and behavior in his offspring. Under such circumstances it was not surprising that he thought me unfit for school life in Tokyo. Moreover the deportment of my older brother in that city had only served to discredit the good name of my father, and so made my hopes of ever seeing Tokyo dwindle even more. The disappointment my father suffered was still green in his memory, which explains his reluctance and fear to expose me to similar temptations.

About this time — it was early in summer — a European who came from Tokyo to Katase called at our home with the purpose of renting a house for a summer resort. The gentleman, as we heard, was principal of an intermediate or secondary school in Tokyo. A house was rented out to him and he returned later in summer, but this time with about a dozen other Europeans, all dressed alike in a black suit and wearing a black tie. They were School Brothers of Mary.

At his first meeting with them my father immediately inquired about their occupation and they answered: "We educate and train the youth, and that very strictly. Whoever is accepted must follow the daily schedule to the dot and may leave the house only at certain times. We insist on punctuality. On three days a week English is spoken and on three days French."

My father was very much astonished but at the same time very much pleased to hear about their insistency on discipline and the teaching of foreign languages. For me the whole thing spelled a delightful summer vacation. The teachers were comparatively young, full of life, and very cheerful. We frequently went to the beach together, where we swam or sailed in boats. We passed our time fishing in the rivers, climbing the mountains, catching butterflies in the rice fields, and soon became true





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pals. With the advent of September the Brothers left for home. Then my father, who had begun to admire the Brothers, took me to Tokyo and entrusted my education to them. That is how I came to attend the then small but now famous intermediate school *Gyosei*, which means Morningstar.

As contrasted with our times the pupils were much older. Most of them were descendants of families with an overstrained patriotism, who were still steeped in prejudice against Christianity, the much hated *Yaso*-doctrine. And I felt just like the rest. I detested the *Yaso*-religion from the bottom of my soul, and quite naturally there resulted a clash of opinions with my teachers, who were challenged by my attitude. However, since I lacked every religious training I could not cope with them, and in the course of time I was even compelled to admire them.

By and by I began to learn of their private and spiritual lives; how every one of them submitted to his superior with unconditional obedience regardless of nationality, age, or education. I saw how they loved us more than themselves, how they followed a strict rule, made vows and actually lived up to them. An explanation for all this could only be found in their religion. When this first dawned upon me I felt quite certain that in due time I could not escape the alternative of becoming a Catholic. All along I had been determined to make good in life by loyal service to God and my country, and Divine Providence guided my steps and helped me to carry out my firm resolutions.

My charted course was by no means easy to follow since my father happened to be counsellor at a famous Buddhist temple. At home we had a *Kamidana*, a Shinto shrine, and likewise a *Budsudan*, or Buddhist altar. Every morning both were venerated according to ancient family tradition. Naturally I hesitated to disclose my intentions

## *An Admiral Takes His Bearings*

to my father until one day I mustered enough courage to do so. I wrote him a letter with the request that he permit me to take instructions in the Catholic religion. When my father received the letter he was so dumb-founded and upset that he immediately hurried to Tokyo and pressed me to banish such thoughts from my mind. The *Yaso*-teaching, he maintained, was dangerous to the state. I should not jeopardize my career from the start and allow myself to suffer shipwreck. No matter what arguments I advanced, he insisted on his refusal, and since I failed to convince him — because probably I felt reluctant to assert my claims against the will of my father — I went to bed inconsolable and wept the whole night. This happened in the spring of 1893.

But God did not forsake me. During the summer vacation, when I came home to my parents, I ventured to ask a second time. My father remained firm as ever. Finally I made a further attempt, and with all the eloquence at my command I brought up my case again. I believe the Holy Ghost must have loosened the tongue of a poor, unbaptized heathen. I reasoned about as follows with my father: "You know that I am growing up and thinking about my future. As things are I am not sure whether I shall not at some time or other stray from the right path and bring disgrace on you. But it is my firm conviction that I can guard my soul from wrong only as a Catholic. That was the reason for asking your permission to investigate the Catholic Faith. You refused. On the other hand you value honor above everything else. Should I, therefore, ever dishonor myself, I refuse to accept any responsibility for my conduct." Thereupon my father answered: "Very well, you have my permission. You may write to the principal."

Immediately after vacation, in September, I began taking instructions. On Christmas eve of the same year I was baptized in the chapel of the Morningstar school. I



## *Admiral Shinjiro Stefano Yamamoto*

was the first person to be baptized there and the first Japanese whom my teacher baptized. I assume I need not mention that there was no change in my outward appearance. It was simply the will of God that manifested itself in my life.

Since that memorable Christmas night more than forty years have winged their flight into eternity. But while still a youngster, I joined the navy, took part in three battles and, strange to say, was more than once miraculously saved from death. I was entrusted by the government — it was the first time in the history of Japan — with a message to the Holy Father. I also had the singular honor of accompanying the Crown Prince, the now ruling emperor, on his trip to Europe, and, to fill to the brim the measure of happiness, it was my privilege to spend the rest of my life at the court of my sovereign.

I am now happily married for over thirty years. God blessed our union with several children. He did not take into account my sins and frailties. I am walking in the sunshine of His mercy.

## CURED OF RELATIVISM

PROFESSOR DR. PAUL KOTARO TANAKA

PROTESTANTS are wont to speak of their religious experiences. For this reason I was inclined to do likewise shortly after my conversion to the Catholic Faith. I spoke of my own experiences as if they were of value and importance. Now, however, since I no longer rate them as I did then, I am in a rather different state of mind.

If I should have anything to say it would be merely this, that I became a Catholic through God's grace eleven years ago, and though the purpose of religion is not merely to procure for us peace of mind and happiness in life, yet I am enjoying far more peace of mind and greater happiness than before my conversion. With a sense of gratitude toward God I acknowledge that I feel at present as if I had not received Baptism at the age of thirty-five but as an infant. God takes hold of us and draws us into His service in many ways. He employs quite common and also at times disagreeable happenings in our contact with our fellow men, and may even utilize the untoward events of our lives, which might seem to be of no benefit in the case of others, in order to direct us according to the plans of His Providence. All I would say is: God forcibly took hold of me and I also took hold of Him more and more.

Looking back upon my life I am filled with a feeling of unworthiness that I should have been privileged to understand Catholic truths and to have been endowed with their riches. These truths, like all truths, exist inde-



pendently as the sun, regardless as to whether I recognize them or not. They are reflected even in the smallest things, just as the sun is reflected with all its splendor in the tiny rivulet.

Before my conversion I judged my principles of morality to be of rather high quality, and being a follower of Kant I bowed to my own intellect only, as if it were an infallible ethical standard. I not only rejected a life based upon utilitarian motives, but also vehemently denounced "good works." In fact every act which did not spring from a moral urge, all deeds which were not born from my conviction or not accompanied by ethical motives, I considered to be insincere: as a priest who preaches without conviction, an artist who works without genuine inspiration, a churchgoer who merely attends services because he is compelled to do so, a philanthropist who bestows his gifts only to reap the praise of men.

On the basis of this more or less Kantian criterion I also adjudged the morality of my own actions and those of others. This made me dissatisfied with the prevalent exterior form of morality as practised in Japan, which is a depravation of Confucianism. In my estimation, a life propelled solely by inner motives and not by coercion from the outside was the only one worth while. For this reason the life of an artist seemed to me most ideal. Contrary to a moral system which acclaimed success as the supreme achievement and emphasized primarily exterior action, I considered the establishment of a true relationship between man and man to be possible only by personal contact, a view which I shared with Tolstoi. I failed to realize that such an ideal condition would be marred by uncontrolled emotional manifestations or their suppression and would lead to a deterioration of human relations. The attempt to escape the accusation of insincerity leads of necessity to the other extreme which begets irreverence. The opinions and lives

## *Cured Of Relativism*

of most Protestants, generally members of sects of American origin, were of little avail in the attempt to solve these problems, because they did not go to the bottom of them and consequently made a compromise with life.

Whosoever professes to be a Christian must hold fast to the unalterable and objective facts of Christian doctrine. I sought a foothold by relying on Holy Scripture, a Scripture unencumbered by tradition, theology, and exegesis, but also by any positive Biblical criticism such as I believed would degrade Scripture by subjecting it to historical and archeological research. Thus unaided by any authoritative interpretation and scientific scrutiny, I naturally ran the danger of interpreting Holy Scripture arbitrarily according to my liking. The result could be nothing less than moral anarchy, especially in my case, since with all my evil propensities and passions and weaknesses, I usurped for myself the role of a Pope. Such a pride had to precipitate my fall when moral problems of everyday life imperatively demanded a solution. I became sadly aware of the utter failure of my philosophy. I lacked a criterion which might serve as a corrective of my moral speculations, an authority which should draw a definite boundary line between good and evil.

Then there was another point to consider. I belonged to a group of serious-minded young men which Dr. Uchimura, a man of extraordinary personality and great vision, had gathered about himself. Our master and his followers were dissatisfied with the known Protestant sects. The group uncompromisingly rejected every church. Uchimura, who was a pupil and an ardent admirer of Luther, named his group "evangelical," and absolutely insisted on belief in redemption through faith alone. He demanded a literal and unstinted interpretation of Holy Scripture. He rejected the Sacraments, but at the same time clung steadfastly to belief in the divinity



of Christ and His miracles, putting himself thereby in open contrast to the majority of Protestants in Japan.

My own experience taught me that such a separation of faith and work merely serves the purpose to justify one's own shortcomings. The consoling thought that faith without self-denial will overcome sin, and that life will improve without effort, is a soothing heart balm for many. Under such a teaching, delusion cannot be staved off. The desire to be a Christian without the will to sacrifice, without the readiness to carry the cross, leads inevitably to egotistic self-complacency. Religious subjectivists as we were, we vainly strove after something objective, we wished to possess the Scriptures as our objective norm. However, since we all interpreted the same according to each one's individual fancy, any unity in faith among the members of our group remained a mere dream. Divergent opinions and discord were the result. Nor was this discord of slight consequence when practical questions came up for discussion. We were baffled and embarrassed. Luckily the Catholic Church was to manifest herself to me as the antitype of all such egotism.

Still another matter, however, deserves to be mentioned here. As a student of law I had grown up in an atmosphere and a school of positivism. My dissatisfaction led me to the philosophy of Neo-Kantianism, which system was dominant in Japan for a time. Under the influence of this philosophy, and in view of the manifold aspects of law and morality, it was difficult for me to recognize the existence of a natural law emanating from God. Even now the idea of natural law is ridiculed by most of my colleagues in office. Such, therefore, was the atmosphere of liberalism in which I found myself. Small wonder, then, that it was not easy for me to change my scientific viewpoint even after I had become a Catholic. Finally, however, it became plain to me that Neo-Kantianism, on account of its futility, was unable to cope

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with the problems of state and society. Its sharp distinction between value and reality, norm and law, ethics and sociology, made clear its impracticability.

Contrariwise, Catholic philosophy, and in particular its teaching of natural law, which has been passed down to us from Aristotle and the times of Scholasticism, aided me immensely to free myself from the subjectivism and formalism of Neo-Kantianism. At the same time I overcame my prejudice against inherent natural law, with its fixed standards of right and wrong. And I was equally cured of another delusion under which I had been laboring, one that had prompted me to discard metaphysics as opposed to intellectual honesty. My religious and scientific convictions were no longer irreconcilable. The time of relativism had passed — so far as I was concerned.

As a Catholic, therefore, I have forsworn all moral self-conceit and atomic relativism. Instead of the autonomy of my own will I now obey the divine authority of the Catholic Church. The failure of mere formalism brought me to the recognition of an objective moral law. We Catholics of the whole world, the past and future generations not excepted, are one in our voluntary subjection under a legitimate authority, and in working for the realization of the Kingdom of God on earth. The Catholic concept of society alone, with its spirit of helpfulness, can cure the ills of family and state, and of the world. The realization of Catholic ideals will then revive and sublimate the natural good inherent in Japanese morality.

Experience and science are not inimical to each other. Faith and reason support one another. Thus I may live and labor hopefully without fear that I, as man and scientist, shall ever fail to find a synthesis for the problems confronting me.



## A PRIME MINISTER CAPITULATES

DOM P. C. LOU TSENG-TSIANG, O.S.B.

MY FATHER was a Protestant and a member of the London Mission Society, in which I was baptized. I admired the zeal and charity of the missionaries of this society — a zeal and charity which proclaimed the surpassing moral and social value of Christianity.

Possessed of a simple and sterling faith, my father was extremely charitable. His magnanimity of soul was extraordinary. His mentality was wholly formed by the spirit of ancient China which tells us to follow the law of heaven and to count on its paternal providence, which watches over us. My mother knew the meaning of personal sacrifice and devotion to duty. She forgot herself. She died when I was scarcely eight years old. Her memory remains deeply rooted within my grateful affections.

At the age of twenty-one I came to Petersburg, Russia, to act as interpreter at the Chinese legation. The Chinese ambassador, Shu King Chen, was a profound sage, open-minded, farsighted, and very goodhearted. He found pleasure in forming me by calling my attention to that which constituted the "marrow" of European civilization. According to his opinion the Christian religion was this "marrow." He urged me to study it and pointed to the moral and spiritual influence the Christian church exercised in society and family, and likewise called attention to the international radiations of the Vatican. He induced me to study more closely the elements underlying these problems resulting from our observations.

## *A Prime Minister Capitulates*

At the age of twenty-eight I was married in St. Petersburg to a young Catholic Belgian girl, Miss Berthe Bovy, the daughter of a high Belgian army officer. I promised to have all children reared in the Catholic Faith; however, to our great disappointment, our wedlock remained childless.

It was in the soul and life of my wife that I discovered the soul and life and power of Catholicism. She never broached the question of an approachment or conversion to the Catholic Church. On the other hand, she complied with her religious obligations in a sincere and simple manner. Our mutual attachment was great and unselfish, and in every vicissitude and dedication to the duties of life we were always one heart and soul.

The thought of having no children and no opportunity of living up to my marriage promise filled me with grief. To make up for our disappointment I consequently decided to enter the Catholic Church myself. This Church, in effect, had from the beginning appeared to me the oldest and most perfect of all Christian churches, dating back to the times of the Apostles, showing organic unity, possessing a hierarchy, a living authority, a creed as unchangeable as truth itself, and still supple in its application to the needs of the day. Such and similar reflections engaged me for a long time. I prayed and received the grace to believe in the Holy, Catholic, Apostolic and Roman Church. This gift of grace made me obedient to its call and eager to practise its teaching. Praise and thanksgiving be to our Lord Jesus Christ for this calling.

It still remains for me to mention how later the antecedent goodness of Divine Providence led me to the religious life, and this in turn to the holy priesthood.

In the year 1932 my most Reverend Father Abbot bade me to commit to writing some reminiscences of my conversion to Catholicism. At certain intervals, just as I



*Dom P. C. Lou Tseng Tsiang, O.S.B.*

happened to recall past events, I jotted them down on paper. From these, my memoirs, I glean the following lines. They pertain to the passing of my dear consort and evince what great influence a certain book had on us. I refer to the posthumous writings of Madame Elizabeth Leseur, the *Journal et Pensées de chaque Jour*.

"Every work of duration must be born in sorrow and sacrifice; through these it becomes fecund and must of force reach maturity. God ordained it thus. So it was with the life of Elizabeth Leseur and so it also must be with that of Berthe Lou.

"The former caused her husband's return to the Catholic Faith; the latter induced hers to venture on the road to its teachings. Elizabeth Leseur was confident of the return of her husband to the Church; Berthe Lou went to the grave with the certain knowledge of her husband becoming a religious, because he himself had told and promised her."

It was in Bern, in the course of the long and painful sickness of my wife, 1923-26, that we experienced the influence of Elizabeth Leseur in our home and her powerful intercession. During this time my diary continues as follows:

"The daily routine of the patient was subject to almost military regulations. The time for rising, retiring, for treatment and meals, for a little walk on the terrace, for a game of bridge in the afternoon — all was strictly observed.

"A little reading every day.

"One day I thought the opportune moment had come to disclose to my dear sick wife how I intended to remain ever faithful to her memory. In order not to alarm her and give her cause to interpret my words as indicative of her hopeless condition, I chose an indirect way of letting her know what was on my heart.

"I was wont to read the Paris *Temps* every evening,

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and whilst I complied thus with my duties as a nurse I kept myself informed at the same time about world events. And since I was also in the habit of scanning the book reviews I chanced upon an article one evening dealing with the *Journal* of Madam Elizabeth Leseur, her *Letters to an Unbeliever*, *Letters on Sorrow*, *The Spiritual Life*, etc. At the perusal of these reviews I thought: These books are very appropriate; I shall procure them. If I read to her from them she will certainly find occasion to make a declaration of love as she did twenty-seven years ago.

"The plan was carried out and I ordered the books by Gigord who has in the meantime become my publisher. The *Journal et Pensées* appealed to us most. I read it to my wife day after day, one chapter after another. Some passages in which Elizabeth made protestations of her affections reflected the sentiments of our hearts. The reading of this volume, which we continued at random, so as not to fatigue the patient, was a great delight.

"For many years we had the innocent custom of adopting the gestures and habits of our acquaintances to whom we felt ourselves drawn, no matter whether they were sovereigns, actors, or saints. Following this custom I began naming my wife 'Elizabeth' and she responded by calling me 'Father Lou!' These names we used ever afterward and continued to do so till the hour when Berthe passed into eternity. By means of this artifice I hoped to acquaint her with my intentions at a favorable moment.

"One day whilst reading to her, I suddenly remarked: 'Dear, you emulate Elizabeth Leseur perfectly, but I doubt whether I could ever become another Father Leseur!'

"To my great surprise she responded smilingly: 'Why not? With your good will and God's grace!'

"I had succeeded in my endeavors. Consequently I changed the subject and continued to read. My purpose



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was to let her know and preserve the knowledge within her heart that I intended to remain loyal to her to the extent of even embracing monastic life. At this psychological moment the words of my master Shu rang in my ears for the last time, that I should undergo the process of 'europeanization' to the end.

"Her departure from this world took place without a single word of remonstrance, without expressing a wish, and was accepted silently. For the last time she was understood in her desires and aims by him whom she left behind without consolation.

"On that day of my last demonstration of love to my life's partner of twenty-seven years, to my friend, my counselor of such sovereign unselfishness, I asked myself: What could be the best expression of gratitude to her, who gave herself to me with body and soul, for better for worse? If there is a unique way of acknowledging a service rendered in such human and super-human manner it should consist in showing my most faithful friend in life and in death, that I would depart with her, without preceding or following her, at the same time, in the same minute and the same second ordained by God.

"It is quite a common and not always rare occurrence that two betrothed who were born neither on the same day nor in the same hour, depart life together according to Divine Providence in the same minute and second.

"Our mutual understanding developed further in the sphere beyond. She took my monastic life with her into the grave, and I took her eternal life with me into voluntary solitude. What could still remain for us to speak or to give to each other? We had exchanged all that God had given us: body for body, heart for heart, soul for soul, monastic life for life eternal. Death separated us, but the sanctity of monastic life reunited us forever. My wife watched over me; I pray with her

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and for her. She looks down upon me from on high; I look up to her in admiration. We have never been distant from one another. Now one more bond links us together: Holy Communion, and makes our union more intimate than ever. O my beloved consort, you have not died to me, no, you live! I, however, have died to the world for your sake.

"During the protracted illness of Berthe the personality of Elizabeth Leseur had not ceased to influence our home more and more. We repeated her name often, for our hearts were full of her. A providential circumstance still heightened her benign effect upon us.

"Shortly after I had become acquainted with the writings of Madam Leseur the founding of an Elizabeth Leseur Circle in Bern was announced. Miss Herking, the chairman of this circle, arranged for a lecture of Father Leseur in Bern. At that time no outsider as yet realized that the influence of the saintly soul of Elizabeth Leseur already permeated our home and that we held her name in benediction.

"Naturally, I had to be present at this lecture which took place in the historic city hall. The attendance was very good. Needless to say, I occupied a seat in the first row. Finally it was likewise quite natural that I was the first to congratulate Father Leseur and press his hand as a token of appreciation. Our hearts and souls were in perfect agreement."

My wife died April 16, 1926. A year and a half later, exactly at the end of the time of mourning, I carried out my promise. On October 4, 1927, Berthe Lou witnessed her husband don the garb of St. Benedict and enter monastic life under the protection of the two dear souls who had passed before him into eternity.

Praise be to God for all He deigned to do to me at the intercession of His two faithful servants, Elizabeth Leseur and Berthe Lou!



## FROM THE MANY GODS TO ONE

L. M. BALASUBRAHMANIAM, S.J.

A CONVERSION is an uphill climb, but it is not an unmitigated climb through one thick mist from steamy valleys to the summit. There are a few clear intermediate peaks from which the traveler looks with relief on the part of the journey already accomplished with weary plodding. I shall describe my ascent in terms only of a few of these coigns of vantage.

I did not always hunger for the justice of God. Once I was quite satisfied with my orthodox Hinduism of the popular sort, and a dose of Vedantic pantheism for an occasional anodyne when scruples on the reality of it all troubled me. I was expected to worship a motley crowd of godlings. These deities were not too high above the morals of men, while often enough they were, quite sociably, very much below even that standard. There was not much to choose from among them. All were commanders, all were cowards, all were supreme, all were subordinates. All had their foibles, their failings, their escapades, and their scandals. Indeed apart from their various exploits, good or bad, they were distinguished from one another only by their anatomies, and if anything else — by the number of their wives. To give but one example, the god whose gift I was supposed to be, was a bigamist with a dozen arms and half a dozen heads. Such were the gods whom I was expected to fear, propitiate, and love. Fear and propitiation were easy enough at first, because they were monsters. But love?

## From The Many Gods To One

I knew indeed the "symbol theory": the gods themselves were not like all that; but the sculptor wished to convey the idea that the gods were powerful beings and he symbolized the idea by giving them more than their due share of eyes and limbs and whatnot. This was a facile theory; it was also a foolish defense, because the question was not about the idols, but about the gods themselves. Secondly, why did the artist limit the number of limbs, for instance, to four or six or a dozen? "Diana" of Ephesus was worshiped as *Magna Mater* and in her statue there was no room at all to doubt the magnitude of her motherhood. That sort of symbolism was not unknown to the Hindus. The *Purusa sukta* (*Rg. Veda*, X. 90) begins thus: *Sahasra sirsa Purusa. Sahasraksa sahasrapad*. "Purusa has a thousand heads, a thousand eyes, and a thousand feet." That was a symbolic way of saying that Purusa was the all-knowing, all-pervading being. But from the Purusa of the *Rg. Veda* to the puny godlings of popular Hinduism was a far cry. Besides there remained the more fundamental objection that in the Hindu pantheon the number, for example, of arms of a god was not in any way proportional to his greatness. Thus the "symbol theory" seemed to me a singularly inept apology of Hinduism.

The gods of the Greeks were not good, but they were at least good looking, in the sense that they looked like us men and therefore could be loved by some. The gods of the Hindus could deserve only fear, if it were granted that they did exist and could harm you. It occurred to me sometimes that their existence itself was not so very certain. Many gods had a purely local vogue and most were unknown before the Puranic age. There was something radically wrong with these gods. I attempted an explanation. Here Vedantic pantheism, whose root principle was that there was no plurality, came to my assistance. Therefore: all limbs are one, all the eyes are



one, all the wives are one, all the gods are one, all the worlds are one, you and I are one. Why then bother? Enjoy perfect peace of mind. I could somehow and I did — for a long time.

I imagined that my position was invulnerable in controversy. It involved indeed a certain amount of mental gymnastics. I began to make nice distinctions between absolute and relative truth, finer and grosser minds, Eastern mysticism and Western matter-of-factism, etc., in short, I was slipping slowly into my-country-right-or-wrong mentality of the Neo-Hindus whose books I was reading at the time.

“Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after justice: for they shall have their fill,” is the teaching of the Son of God. That is the characteristic of most conversions. First, a fast more or less severe, more or less painful, more or less prolonged, and then a grand feast which begins on earth but will never end, not even in heaven. Therefore if you are not hungry, if you are self-satisfied, you will never be saturated. Feel the need and the need will be filled. However, I was already full. I did not feel the need. There had to be at least a partial emptying before Christianity got a chance of entry. Rationalism did the trick, and did it thoroughly.

My introduction to the Rationalists was a very casual happening. But once I began to read their books I was gripped by their method. It was soon evident to me that people held to a religion either from a very blind instinct, or a very wide-awake interest, but seldom from a very deliberate intellectual motive. Religion was supposed to go down to the very inmost essence of man, yet it seldom went anywhere near the intellect of man which is an essential part of man; even when it did touch this part, it struck no rock bottom of facts, but floated about listlessly on fallacies. Analyzing my own religion at the time, I made the tremendous discovery

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that the central doctrine of Hindu pantheism "All beings are one being" was a screaming contradiction staring me in the face. Thereafter I had no illusions about the right of Hinduism to my intellectual allegiance. Dives had become Lazarus.

The Rationalists were a very bourgeois set. They preferred small shops, small flats, small parties — in short their mind was a very small thing. They had a very small yardstick with which they retailed their cheap printed cloth. Given time and a tin of sandwiches, they were ready to go around jauntily to measure out with their yardstick anything you wanted, even the solar system, even the universe, because, they said: "Even the universe is measurable." Thus far they were right. It was in their denial I detected their mistake: "What cannot be measured out, cannot exist." I saw that my reason, though it was a finite thing, tended toward something beyond the finite. That something could not be the indefinite, because the indefinite is, after all, only the indefinitely postponed finite. Thus the very tendency of my reason showed me the absolute need of an infinite object, which should exist in reality, as the tendency was a real tendency, as real as my reason. The Rationalists denied the existence of God, the infinite object. I too denied God, that is, the God of the religions. But I could not deny the Infinite God. Yet, I asked myself again and again the Rationalist question: "My reason is a limited thing. How can it perceive, take hold of the Infinite?" I could give no answer.

About that time I was a student in a Catholic college. I went to the Professor of Physics, a Jesuit priest, to clear up for me the idea of the finite and infinite. He introduced me to the grand science of the *philosophia perennis*, though for long after I did not know how grand it was. An inkpot was a finite thing. It could receive, conceivably, an indefinite quantity of ink; it could



receive, possibly, a universe of ink, but it could not receive, by any means, the universal *Ink*. That was beyond its capacity. The universals were not matter, while the inkpot was a very material thing. But reason just reveled in the universals. Reason, therefore, was an immaterial thing. It was not, however, nothing; it was a spiritual thing. The universals transcended the universe. Spirit transcended matter, similarly, the infinite transcended the finite. Man's reason could never grasp the Infinite, but it could try its best. That led us to talk on causality. Once I had a right notion, however inadequate, of matter and spirit, specification and transcendence, and necessity and contingency, I had no more objection against the existence of the Infinite.

There was a God. What was He? He was Intelligence because I had intellect. He was Goodness, that is, to me. The litany could be prolonged, but the question was not what He was to me; it was: "What is He in Himself?" The priest said: "God is and therefore He cannot be what need not be." It was a very negative answer, but I saw that it was the right answer. A positive definition was a positive limitation and a positively limited Infinite was a meaningless jumble of words. About this time Vedantic pantheism whispered in my ear: "I have all these things in my *Upanishads*." I was already acquainted with the *Neti Neti* passages of the *Brhad Aranyaka Upanishad* (IV. II. 4, etc.). They taught only half truths, and half truths in philosophy were worse than falsehoods.

So far I had been in the ethereal regions of high philosophy. Even high philosophy to bear fruit, must have its roots firmly fixed in the soil. I came down then, planted my feet on the solid ground and looked about me to search for a religion which held a God nearest to the God of right philosophy. The gods of the Hindus were obviously no gods. The obscure god of the *Upanishads* was claimed to be the only being, but I was

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certainly a being, therefore I was he. That was a lie, the greatest lie. No wonder he was not the center of any religion properly so called. The Moslem god was a benevolent tyrant, but a tyrant. The god of the Theosophists was a juggler's trick, while the Buddhists gloried in having no god. There remained the God of the Christians. Him they called Father. I found that this idea was the nearest approach of any religion to the idea of God I then had.

I accepted the idea that God was Father, but I did not know yet that the Father was God, because I did not as yet know that the Son was God, and as regards the Holy Spirit, I did not know, for a long time to come, that there was a Holy Spirit at all. My introduction to God the Son was, like my introduction to God, under the auspices of the Rationalists.

I was still a Rationalist, but I could not trust the Rationalists always. I used the yardstick they had placed in my hands and found that they did not know its full use. I was not going to be a slave of their shibboleths. I had seen them at close quarters. They would be exquisitely suave, perfectly impartial, and coldly critical in their exposition of all religions. They were in fact all that, till they spoke about Christianity. Somehow Christianity put them out completely every time they looked at it. In front of it, all their sweet reasonableness, even their good breeding, certainly their objectivity, were gone. They just raged. Then, billingsgate was elegant speech compared to theirs. That set me thinking. You do not lose your temper altogether, if you have at least one trump. But these otherwise estimable people lost their temper completely. I saw thus the strength of reason and the weakness of Rationalism in the face of the Christian religion. But that did not send me galloping to the baptismal font. Much water had to flow under the bridge before it could flow over my head.



Here, then was the Rationalistic attitude: Christ was the Church and the Church was Christ. This was sound Paulinism. Perhaps. It was the mystic theology of medieval Bernard. It may be. This was certainly the slogan of a few foreseeing contemporary Catholic apologists who were influenced by Eastern pantheism. Well, live and learn. I was not moved to study the Christian religion from Christians by these arguments of the Rationalists. What moved me was the great revelation that the very Rationalists believed this doctrine with an astonishing fervor. They fought the Church by fair means and foul, because they honestly believed that she was the contemporary Christ. They spat at Christ because they were convinced that He was the very life of the Church. *Écrases l'Infâme!*

I knew the Church was doing vigorous work in my district. I saw what she did and what she stood for when she could not carry out her purpose. She was the loving mother of the virgin and widow, of the outcast and the downtrodden, of the poor and the Pariah. There was nothing bad in all that. The Rationalists told me that she had a past. I read her history. I saw that, given the length, it was a wonderfully clean history. Then I made a more important discovery. In the history of the Church I came upon the history of the churches. It was also the more interesting discovery. It was a pleasant game to speculate on the undreamt possibilities of the as yet unborn churches, such as the Blavatsky church and the Bacchanalian church, a Hindu church and a Hottentot church, a Mohammedan church and a Mumbo Jumbo church. The churches said that the church was a religious fellowship. Now any fellow was a religious fellow if you forgot to say what his religion was. The churches forgot. I did not. She never ceased to proclaim that as there was only one Life and one Truth, so there was only one Way, the only Way. Therefore, she was the

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Christ. Therefore, Christ was the Church.<sup>1</sup> The Rationalists were right after all.

I had reached by this time almost the end of my journey. The usual catechism instructions followed. I could not have taken the final and irrevocable step if I had not had the encouragement of a convert who had suffered much on account of his conversion. I was baptized in the Blood of Christ on June 17, 1919, and received the Body of Christ two days later. It was only the beginning of a repletion, which I trust, will never end.

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<sup>1</sup> The meaning, namely, is that Christ is the Head; the Church, His Mystic Body. Together, in the language of St. Augustine, they form "the whole Christ." Thus Christ identified Himself with the Church when He said to Saul, "Why persecutest thou Me?"



## UP FROM HINDUISM TO CHRISTIANITY

BRAHMCHARI R. ANIMANANDA

WHEN I was a child my grandmother taught me to speak the truth always and to love God. This, she said, would reward me with God-vision. One night, in a dream, I saw Sree Krishna, the Hindu god with a lovely crown on his head. I was happy indeed and thought myself very fortunate. Soon I offered myself as a *brahmchari* disciple to a Hindu *sannyasi* (monk). My grandfather, however, rebuked me for this and brought me back home. This was a surprise to me. I could not understand why I was punished for doing a good thing. I was put in a school but had the same painful experience there also. For love of truth speaking I had a severe beating from a schoolboy. This made me meditative. I often asked myself: "Why did God make me? What did He gain thereby?" My companions would answer that the miseries of this life were the result of evil done in previous lives. This did not satisfy me, and I would persist in repeating the question: "But why did He make me at all? Would it not have been better if He had not made me?" Now that I am a Catholic I partially understand by the light of Faith the mystery surrounding creation, but it still remains a mystery. It will be unveiled when the light of glory will open our eyes in the beatific vision.

As I grew up, the superstition and credulity of the people coupled with the ungodly lives of the Hindu priests and *sannyasis* weakened my faith in Hinduism.

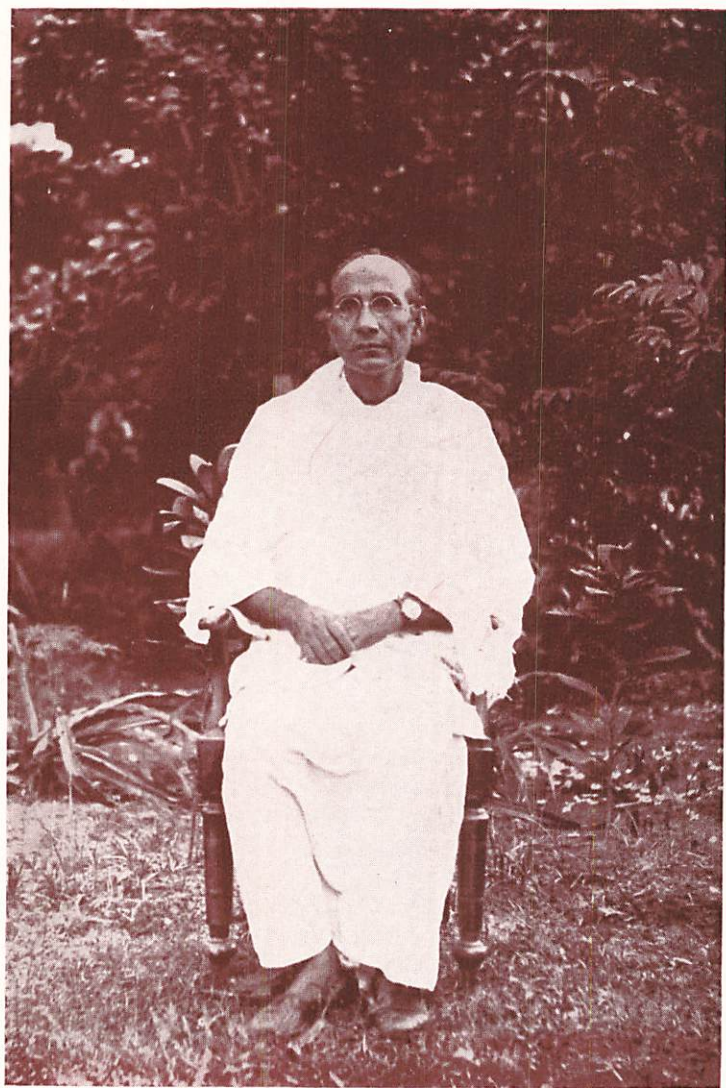
## *Up From Hinduism To Christianity*

On one occasion, during public worship, I was given along with other worshipers a bit of clay to be carefully preserved, as it would change into gold in a year. Unfortunately, it did not. Whenever I went to the Sikh temple to receive consecrated sweets, called *Kanah Prasad*, the quantity of *prasad* received would vary in proportion to the sum of money placed as an offering before the *bava* (Sikh head of a temple). The officiating brahman showed the same love of money at the marriage or the death of a person. All this tended to destroy my faith in Hinduism, though my faith in God and in the founder of Sikhism remained unimpaired.

After finishing my course of studies in the vernacular school, I joined the C. M. S. High School. Here I continued to remain for some six years. When school began, the boys were to repeat the "Our Father" in the vernacular after the missionary, and I used to blaspheme the holy name of God along with many other boys, by substituting the translation of the word *calf* for the translation of the word *father*, as the two words rhyme well in the Sindhi language. After I had been four years in the school, I joined the Sunday Bible Class. It was on one of these Sundays that Mr. Redman, the head of the school, narrated from the Bible the history of the three Jews refusing to adore the idol that had been set up by the command of the king, and how they were cast into a fiery furnace, and yet not a hair of their heads was burnt. The earnestness of the missionary was a testimony to the truth of the miracle, and so I thought within myself that Christianity was true.

Two years passed, and we had for our textbook in the school, the *Acts of the Apostles*. The conversion of St. Paul made such a deep impression on my mind that I could no longer doubt the truth of the divine origin of Christianity. I quite remember telling one of my friends, while out for a walk with him, that a day would





B. Anirnananda.

come when I would turn a Christian. When an acquaintance of mine learnt my religious views, he asked me to read *Asia's Message to Europe* by Keshab Chundra Sen. Its perusal confirmed me in my belief. I said to myself, "I would rather belong to the religion of the 'Prince of Prophets' than to that of Keshab Chundra Sen."

But the day of my baptism was far off. The moral and intellectual difficulties were too great. It was difficult to meet the objections raised against Christianity by the rationalistic school; and it was impossible to defend the Protestant dogma that non-Christians were all doomed to go to hell. Then again the few Indian converts to Protestantism with whom I came in contact were entirely dependent on the missionary, and their lives, if not inferior to those of non-Christians, were in no way superior to them. To be a convert and to be obliged to live with them was a depressing thought.

When I learnt, however, that a high-caste Bengali brahman, now known as Upadhyay Brahmbandhav, had sacrificed position, prestige, and felt the pinch of poverty for the cause of Christ, I said to myself that I, too, must make up my mind to be baptized. In the event of my leaving the parental home, I could be quite happy in his company.

It was on Good Friday after his baptism on February 26, 1891, that he organized a meeting and his earnest pleading about the divine character of our Lord influenced me so much that I desired to renounce the world and be a Christian missionary.

I delivered a lecture on moral courage and Upadhyay Brahmbandhav was in the chair. During the course of the lecture I observed that we should imitate the great reformer, Martin Luther, a model of moral courage. The president very wisely said nothing on the point. After the lecture, Mr. Permanand Mewaram, one of Brahmbandhav's friends, told me privately that Luther was



## *Up From Hinduism To Christianity*

not the hero I had taken him to be. Further, when I learnt that Brahmabandhav was in favor of the Catholic Church, I could not help denouncing him as a fool: to have left Hindu idolatry for Catholic idolatry. Moreover, I added that Guru Nanak, the founder of Sikhism was much holier than the Virgin Mary, for the former became what he was through his own merits, while the latter did nothing and was merely the Mother of Jesus. That she is the only creature immaculate from her very conception, that she is in very truth the queen of virgins who valued virginity more than heaven itself, and that she is the queen of martyrs, her whole life being one long martyrdom, was a thing I was quite ignorant of.

Mr. Permanand, now editor of *Lux*, a Catholic fortnightly, lent me a book written by Bishop Spalding. This proved conclusively that Luther was no reformer, but a rebel against the divine authority of the Catholic Church, and that his teaching was anti-Christian and anti-Scriptural. While the writings of Dr. Meurin, Bishop of Bombay, showed me that the image worship in the Catholic Church was quite different from idolatry, for this consists in giving divine honor to creatures, but that is merely the giving of relative honor to creatures that by total self-surrender to the Divine Will have made themselves the abodes of Divinity.

Having imbibed a general distrust for everything coming from the Catholics, I asked the Anglo-Indian headmaster of the C. M. S. school whether the things the Catholics said about Luther were true. He said that he would write to Germany and make an inquiry on the subject, expressing at the same time his regret that I had come to these things. "Why did you read the Romanist books?" he asked. I urged that all I was anxious to know was whether the charges against Luther were true. To this he replied that he was speaking to me about Christ and not Luther. This hesitating attitude of Protestants

## *Brahmchari R. Animananda*

toward Luther, changed mine toward the Catholic Church. I borrowed Wilmer's handbook of the Christian religion and began to study it carefully. Herein Christian doctrine proved so attractive and consonant with reason that I could not but be convinced of the divine origin of the Catholic Church.

It was the charming personality of Christ that attracted me while I was under Protestant influence, but it seems to me I would not have become a Christian if I had not, by the infinite mercy of God, come to know the Catholic Church; for the intellectual difficulties created by the rationalistic atmosphere of the day could not be adequately solved by Protestantism. I recall with pleasure and gratitude how the late Rev. Fr. Patholf, S.J., of the Bombay Archdiocese, solved my difficulties and those of my friends to our entire satisfaction, and how this confirmed and strengthened my conviction.

The day of my baptism was, however, far off; for, though the intellectual difficulties were removed, the moral ones remained. I could not cut myself off from those that were attached to me by the ties of blood and affection. Meanwhile, I freely spoke to my friends about the truth of the Catholic religion, of the sanctity and unity of her doctrine, and the unique honor that was associated with a virgin life as practised in the Catholic Church. The heroic lives of the saints gave me an insight into the divine Personality of Christ and the unrivaled sanctity of the Church. The very pictures of the saints spoke to me of her sanctity. I felt that the room in which the picture of St. Aloysius was hung was filled with holiness. It was about this time that I spoke to a pupil of mine about the claims of the Catholic Church. He sent me a letter requesting me not to speak to him of religion till I had given my heart to Christ. Now it was quite true that I had not given my heart to Him, so I said to myself that I ought to become a Catholic and practice



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what I preached. Some eight months after this, encouraged by the example of my countryman, and led on by the grace of God, I was baptized by the Rev. Father Salinger, S.J., in Hyderabad (Sind), on the Feast of the Blessed Trinity, May, 1893.

To state the three points about my conversion briefly: I *thought* of becoming a Christian because I was educated in a Protestant school; I was *convinced* of the truth of Christianity by studying Catholic literature. The greatest obstacle in my way was *moral*. I did not like to displease my relations and friends. The greatest *help*, after the grace of God, was the friendship with self-sacrificing, enthusiastic converts.

## BY DIVERSE PATHS INTO THE FOLD

J. STEPHEN NARAYAN, B.D.

AS MY conversion into the Catholic Church was a process extending over many years, my readers will kindly bear with me if I have to start from my earliest days.

During the first fourteen years of my life in my native town in India I was brought up as an orthodox Hindu boy, being the son of a Brahmin. My noble mother, whom I loved most fondly on earth, kept me from evil by her strict and wise rule and by her sympathetic and ardent love. From my infancy I was taught to pray daily, "Oh, God, give me true understanding." My subsequent history is the answer to that prayer.

At the age of fourteen a great influence began to come into my heart and mind. From the compulsory Bible classes in the Protestant school which I attended, and through the close association with one of my masters there, a great fascination and love for our Lord grew in me, which finally resulted in my baptism, in the year 1916, after I had completed my eighteenth year.

This meant complete severance from my home and my mother, due to the strict caste rules of orthodox Hindu Society. As I knew nothing better at that time, I naturally joined the extreme Protestant section of the Church of England. My sole guide and authority for all matters religious and moral was the Bible, every word of which I believed to have been inspired by the Holy Spirit, and which I was taught to interpret according to my own personal inclinations.



## *By Diverse Paths Into The Fold*

But very soon I began to miss in the dry Protestant religion and worship around me, the spirit of sacrifice, self-denial, and intense devotion which I had known among pious Hindus. I wondered whether there were any better forms of Christianity. In course of time I discovered there were such forms, by coming into contact with churches and missionaries of a more High Church type during my occasional trips to other parts of India. Consequently my views regarding the Church and Sacraments were constantly changing. About this time my mother died after having followed me into the Protestant church. Her death made me inquire into the condition of the departed souls, and the Catholic doctrines of Purgatory and prayers for the dead appealed to me.

In 1920 I joined the theological College in Bangalore to study for my theological degree and to prepare for the Anglican ministry. The atmosphere of the college was intensely Protestant. I was anxious to study the writings of the early Christians, as the Anglicans hold that the Christianity of the early centuries was the purest. But to my great surprise the library of this college did not possess those writings. However, it was in Bangalore that I was privileged to meet Dr. H. C. E. Zacharias, who belonged at the time to that section of the Anglicans who have borrowed many Catholic doctrines and practices and call themselves "Anglo-Catholics." From then on he began to have great influence over me by his friendship, through his regular letters, and through the many High Church and Catholic books to which he introduced me.

After a year in Bangalore, I went to Calcutta to continue my studies at Bishop's College, which is the central Higher Theological College for the Anglican Province of India. In Calcutta I came into close contact with the Fathers of the Oxford Mission Brotherhood, which is an Anglican Religious Order working largely among university students and is definitely "Anglo-Catholic" in

*J. Stephen Narayan, B.D.*

beliefs and practices. I started the practice of going to confession. Though those confessions had no objective sacramental value, due to lack of valid priesthood, yet I cannot deny the great subjective help they gave me in my interior life. I also had the happiness of studying the works of the early Fathers during our theological course in the college. From these writings, and from the members of the Oxford Mission, I learned many Catholic teachings and began to associate myself with the so-called "Anglo-Catholics." The latter look upon the Anglican, the Greek, and the Roman churches, as branches of one Catholic Church, and look forward to a time when their unhappy schism will be healed and they will be once again externally united into one body. I had heard and read about the "Conversations" that were taking place at Malines between certain members of the Anglican and Catholic churches and had hopes of a speedy reunion.

Toward the end of 1924 I was ordained deacon to work in Poona under another group of Anglican monks, popularly known as the Cowley Fathers. Dr. Zacharias, who now lived in Poona, used to spend Saturday nights with me, and of course, theology was our frequent topic of conversation. He introduced me to an Irish Jesuit, Father Lauder, who by his kindness and sympathy attracted me much to the Catholic Church.

Three incidents occurred in 1926 which were the beginning of the unsettlement of my faith in the Anglican Church. Dr. Zacharias made his submission to the Catholic Church, after having passed through great intellectual doubts, many of which he used to discuss with me. Moreover, by this time I had got married. One day, while explaining to my wife the Anglo-Catholic doctrine of the Church, she asked me how the three branches — Rome, Constantinople, and Canterbury — being out of communion with one another, could still be three living branches of one Catholic Church. I could not explain the



## *By Diverse Paths Into The Fold*

point, and naturally it upset my mind, as it came soon after the conversion of Dr. Zacharias.

I had now become an Anglican priest. Then one day in the course of conversation Father Lauder remarked that the Anglican orders were invalid, partly because they lacked proper intention. I had studied this question from the Anglican point of view, but now when my mind was already unsettled, Father Lauder's remarks made the question appear to me in a new light. I borrowed and read several books from the library of the Cowley Fathers on this subject. But I still felt uneasy in my mind regarding the validity of Anglican Orders. I tried to quiet my mind when my Anglican confessor assured me that such doubts were usually from the devil.

In 1927 I was transferred to Ceylon to work as assistant minister and principal of a school in Batticaloa. I was very pleased with this change and hoped that the new surroundings would help me to forget my intellectual difficulties. But God intended otherwise. The church in Batticaloa was of a very Low Church type, quite different from the High, ritualistic, "Anglo-Catholic" type I was accustomed to in Poona. My Vicar and I had many disagreements, most of them on theological points. When he found that I believed in Transubstantiation, he forbade my teaching this doctrine to the boys, though I was allowed to hold any view in private. These disagreements made me feel dreadfully lonely and I longed for the unity of faith.

In the meantime certain events in the Anglican Church were also disturbing me. Bishop Barnes openly advocating birth control some years before; his utterances regarding the Blessed Sacrament, that it was magic; the powerlessness of the Anglican Bishops to deal with him; then the House of Commons, which included even non-Christians and atheists, deciding the Liturgy of the Anglican Church; and the House of Bishops recommend-

ing that the reserved Sacrament should be shut up in a cupboard in the sacristy instead of giving it the honor and worship that is due to our Lord — such were a few of the many factors that were shaking my faith in the Anglican Church.

Besides, my acquaintance with the late Rev. Boutry, S.J., principal of the Catholic College at Batticaloa, revived in my mind my old associations and theological difficulties in Poona. The Malines Conversations had come to an end and with them all my hopes of reunion with Rome. When I read the new Papal Encyclical on Unity I felt a great admiration for the spirit of Rome which reflected the uncompromising and orthodox temper of the early Church in doctrinal matters. But I still believed, or rather forced myself to believe, that the Church of England had valid orders and valid Sacraments, and as long as she had these I believed myself to be within the fold of the Catholic Church.

The great turning point in my life came one morning when I was reading a Sermon of St. Augustine, the great Bishop of Hippo, and came across a particular passage. Though I had read it several times before, it never struck me as it did that morning. It was as if a new floodlight had been turned on it. The passage ran as follows:

“That which the soul is to the human body the Holy Spirit is to the body of Christ, which is the Church. That which the soul effects in a single body the Holy Spirit effects in the whole Church. But observe what it is you ought to avoid, to do, and to fear. In the human body it happens sometimes that a member is cut off — a hand, a finger, a foot. Does the soul accompany the severed member? While it was joined to the body it lived; when it is cut off it loses life. So for the Christian, while he is a member of the Church his life is in his body, he is a Catholic. Is he cut off, he becomes a heretic: the spirit does not accompany the severed member” (Sermon 247).



## *By Diverse Paths Into The Fold*

When St. Augustine spoke these words he had in his mind the Donatists, who were a schismatic body with valid Orders and valid Sacraments. Not only St. Augustine but the whole Catholic Church of his day regarded the Donatists as outside her fold. To the "Anglo-Catholic" the Church of the early Fathers is infallible, and here was that early Church maintaining that valid Orders and valid Sacraments alone could not make a sect a part of the Catholic Church. So it dawned on me that even if the Anglican Church had valid Orders and valid Sacraments, this fact alone would not make her a part of the Catholic Church. To be a Catholic it is necessary to belong to the Catholic Church herself wherever she is to be found.

I had already been convinced that the Church of Rome had greater claims than the Anglican to be the true Church of Christ; but so far I had not felt the need of change, since I clung to the theory that the Anglican Church, if she had valid Orders and Sacraments, was a vital part of the Catholic Church. Now this theory was shattered by St. Augustine's words. From that day I was no longer an Anglican. Still I could not make up my mind to submit to Rome. For though I saw in her all the dogmas and the spirit of the early Church, I believed that she had added new dogmas to the Deposit of Faith. This misconception was cleared at last by Cardinal Newman's great work on the *Development of Christian Doctrine*. The Cardinal shows how the Church is a living organism with the Holy Spirit as its vital force and guide. She grows and develops like any other organism. With this idea in mind, when I mentally traced the history of the Church, I was convinced that the present Catholic Church in her Faith, in her worship, and in her system of government, was but the logical development of the Church of the early centuries.

I resigned my work in Batticaloa and all my other con-

*J. Stephen Narayan, B.D.*

nections with the Anglican church and retired to Trincomalee. Here, after a retreat and final instructions under Rev. L. Dupont, S.J., my wife and I entered the Catholic Church on the eve of Palm Sunday, in the year 1928.



## ONLY ONE TRUE CHURCH OF CHRIST

RUDOLPH ARCHIBALD MNDAWENI

ALTHOUGH I am not writing an autobiography, there are some things in my life which I cannot omit without damage to the account of my conversion.

I was born in Protestantism — the Wesleyan Church — and hence my knowledge of God and His commandments was that of a Protestant. I knew nothing of any other denomination till I began college at the age of seventeen. Before I left home for college I wished to be a minister and often prayed secretly for the realization of this wish. After applying for admittance into a Protestant college, I afterwards changed my mind and decided to go to a Catholic college with my friend whose application had not been accepted at the Protestant college. It was at the Mariannhill Training College in Natal that I first came in contact with Catholicism.

From the start I condemned the Catholic Faith and its practices. Just as other prejudiced people, I accused Catholics of many unfounded things. I must confess that during my first years at college I was violently anti-Catholic, which was undoubtedly due to my ignorance of Catholic doctrine.

As time went on, I became familiar with Catholic practices and worship. I also got a deeper knowledge of the so-called Reformation with its unpleasant consequences. The thought that sects had formed outside of the Church founded by Christ perturbed my mind. Still I consoled myself with the Protestant argument that the

## *Rudolph Archibald Mndaweni*

Church of Christ also included the faithful of the various Protestant sects. However, what I heard from others did not tend to encourage me in my belief in regard to Protestantism.

The mental confusion caused by the claims of so many churches to be of divine origin kept harassing me. All arguments seemed to be in favor of the Catholic Church which caused me to lose confidence in the Protestant church as a savior of souls. I could not see the necessity for such a multiplicity of churches. This induced me to make a careful study of Catholicism with the result that in the end I found myself more a Catholic than a Protestant. I was really convinced that Christ did not wish to be worshiped in such diverse ways when He said: "Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I shall build My Church, and the gates of Hell shall not prevail against it." It was only *one Church* He mentioned, *not churches*.

I reported my intention of becoming a Catholic to the authorities of the college without previously dispelling all doubts to the contrary. I still did not know how far I would be able to go with the Catholic Church. On the other hand, I was reluctant to remain within the Protestant church any longer. In fact, after a closer study of Catholicism, some Protestant practices were quite repugnant to me. It was very strange that such a change affected me, for before this time I almost came to blows with Catholic acquaintances whenever my arguments fell flat. This was perhaps due to the fact that I rather wished to conquer than to be conquered. Thus after three years I left the college with the firm determination to become a Catholic.

Once more, after leaving college, I was thrown among bitter and opposing Protestants, but I stood the test, for nothing shook me in my decision. Fortunately my parents gave me every liberty in the matter. I was the first convert to Catholicism from the big Protestant mission, and sev-



## *Only One True Church Of Christ*

eral of my fellow students followed me in the step I had taken. It was a very difficult thing to practise the Catholic Faith as a catechumen in a stronghold of Protestantism, but I struggled bravely to be faithful to my new religion. All along I prayed hard and begged our Lord to show me the right way by which I should serve Him, and that if the Catholic Church was the right one, He might give me courage to face the abuses which would follow my conversion. The bad things said about my religion spurred me on. I was now able to argue successfully for the Catholic Church. Thus it was a case of a dog, if I may say so, turning against his master.

A year after I left school I received employment as a clerk in a town but three miles away from a Catholic mission, a most welcome appointment for many reasons. Before the lapse of a year I quit office work and joined the teaching staff of the Benedictine Mission. Here I became fully convinced that the Catholic Church is the only church instituted by Christ to save souls. I finished my instructions with great zeal and resolved to be a good Catholic. I shall ever remember those beautiful days on which I solemnly received the sacraments of the true Church and the veil of lamentable ignorance and prejudice was torn from my eyes. On April 16, 1927, I made my first Confession; on April 24, my First Holy Communion; and on June 5 of that same year I was confirmed.

Since that time I feel that I am truly spiritually alive. My mind is calm and settled. What I longed and still long for, is to live and die a perfect Catholic both in name and in deed. Thanks to God, my parents also became Catholics. In a country such as South Africa one cannot help but hope that the time will come when our misled brethren will awaken and realize their deception. The Bantu people admit that the Catholic Church was the first one, but they have been taught to believe that Prot-

*Rudolph Archibald Mndaweni*

estantism is another form of true Christianity. Once they have seen the fallacy of this belief their watchword and prayer will also be:

*One Fold and One Shepherd.*



## A PARTING WORD

THE foregoing self-revelations of modern converts might be multiplied a thousandfold. Only a few instances have been selected in order to show the diversified paths which lead to Mother Church, the spiritual home and haven of humanity. A Church which after nineteen hundred years still exercises such magic influence over the human heart must be more than the work of man. To share her Faith means, therefore, to partake of her life and immortality. To be sure, the Church neither lives on the praise of the world, nor will she perish through the hatred of the world. Still she is moved to sorrow that not all find the way to her who alone is one in faith and sanctity.

One in herself, nor rent by schism, but sound  
Entire, one solid shining diamond,  
Not sparkles shattered into sects like you:  
One is the Church, and must be to be true.  
One central principle of unity,  
As undivided, so from errors free;  
As one in faith, so one in sanctity.

Thus one, thus pure, behold her largely spread,  
Like the fair ocean from her mother-bed;  
From East to West triumphantly she rides,  
All shores are watered by her wealthy tides.

— John Dryden, *The Hind and Panther*

## BIOGRAPHICAL DATA

1. MOODY, JOHN, investment executive. Founder, President and Director of Moody's Investment Service, with offices in New York, London, Chicago, Boston, Philadelphia, and Los Angeles. Author: *Moody's Manual of Investments* (annual statistical publication in 5 volumes). Other publications are: *The Truth about the Trusts*, *The Investor's Primer*, *The Art of Wall Street Investing*, *The Railroad Builders*, *Masters of Capital*, *Profitable Investing*, *The Long Road Home*. Contributor to *America*, *Commonweal*, *Catholic World*, *The Sign*, *Atlantic Monthly*, to business and technical magazines.

2. HUNT, MOST REVEREND DUANE GARRISON, Bishop of Salt Lake City, Utah. Educated at Cornell; University of Chicago; University of Iowa; St. Patrick's Seminary, Menlo Park, California. Was engaged in teaching; later rector, Cathedral of the Madeleine, Salt Lake City; chancellor, vicar general, and administrator of the Diocese of Salt Lake City. Papal Chamberlain, December 1, 1924, and Domestic Prelate, Rt. Rev. Msgr., April 28, 1930. Speaker on the Catholic Hour. Solemnly consecrated Bishop of Salt Lake City in the Cathedral of the Madeleine, Salt Lake City, October 28, 1937. Bishop Duane G. Hunt is the twelfth convert to be raised to the episcopal dignity in the United States.

3. ROTH, AUGUSTINE J.\*

4. METCALFE, RALPH H., alumnus of Marquette University, Milwaukee, came out second best as sprinter at the Olympic Games in Los Angeles in 1932. In 1933 he broke the record in the hundred-meter race. Metcalfe is a member of the colored race.

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\* Biographical details withheld at desire of the contributor.



## Biographical Data

5. ROCKNE, KNUTE, former director of athletics and head football coach of the University of Notre Dame du lac, Indiana, was killed at the height of his career in an airplane crash, March 31, 1931. As a football coach, this "maker of men" as he was called, never had his equal. A \$600,000 Rockne Memorial Fieldhouse was opened in his honor in 1939.

6. ATKINSON, DR. SAM, of Toronto, Canada, organized Socialism in the Dominion of Canada and lectured on Rationalism in the United States. Soon after his conversion he published *My Catholic Neighbours*, and later, *If Columbus Came Back to America*.

7. DUDLEY, REV. OWEN FRANCIS. Educated at Monmouth Grammar School and Lichtfield Theological College. Ordained for the Anglican ministry, 1911; exercised ministry at Westbury-on-Severn and St. John's Limehouse; received into the Church, 1915, and ordained to the priesthood, 1917. Served as Catholic chaplain to Gunners, British Army, 41st Division, on French and Italian Fronts and was wounded. Joined the Catholic Missionary Society, 1919, of which he is Superior since 1933. Lectured throughout England and Wales for the Faith, in churches, public halls, and out of doors. Author of *Will Men Be like Gods?*, *The Shadow on the Earth*, *Deathless Army: Advance!*, *The Abomination in Our Midst*, *The Church Unconquerable*, *The Masterful Monk*, *Pageant of Life*, *The Coming of the Monster*, *Human Happiness and H. G. Wells*, *A Punch at Everybody*. Lectured in 1939 on a world tour.

8. KAYE-SMITH, SHEILA, the "novelist of Sussex" was received into the Catholic Church with her husband, a clergyman of the English High Church, in 1929. As a child she had three ambitions: to live in the country, to be a celebrated novelist, and to be extremely High Church. In her autobiography *Three Ways Home* she tells how she accomplished all three. Calvert Alexander

## Biographical Data

says of her writings: "Religion and the things of the spirit have never been absent in her works." Of these are to be mentioned *Sussex Gorse*, *Shepherds and Sackcloth*, *Superstition Corner*, *Rose Deeprise*.

9. CHESTERTON, GILBERT KEITH, was equally famed as journalist, philosopher, lecturer, and writer. After his conversion in 1922 he became an ardent defender of the Catholic Faith and Christian Orthodoxy. Chesterton, whose essays reflect both humor and humility, has been called the "greatest wit of the century." Even before his formal conversion he wrote an apology of the Catholic Faith entitled *Orthodoxy*. His publication, *G. K.'s Weekly*, was a result of his interest in Distributism. In all his writings he shows himself past master of paradox. Of his numerous works only a few can here be mentioned, *The Wild Knight*, *Heretics*, *The Everlasting Man*, *The Thing*, *Why I am a Catholic*, *The Well and the Shadow*, *Autobiography of G. K. Chesterton*. In recognition of his intrepid championship of the Church, Pope Pius XI made Chesterton a Knight of St. Gregory the Great in 1934. He died in 1936.

10. BURGESS-BAYLY, A. R., Leamington, England, was formerly an Anglican minister. As a result of his study of the convert movement among the Protestant clergy of England he compiled a list of more recent English convert clergymen. According to these data approximately 900 English clergymen turned Catholic since the death of Cardinal Newman. Since his own conversion in 1910 about 300 Protestant ministers of England embraced the Catholic Faith.

11. LESLIE, SHANE, was born in Dublin and educated at Eton, Paris, and Cambridge. While spending a winter in Russia (1907) he became a good friend of the Russian novelist Tolstoi and was converted the following year. Later, while touring and lecturing in America, he met and married the daughter of the governor of the Philip-



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piners. His works, which are very numerous, include: *Verses in Peace and War*, *Ghost in the Isle of Wight*, *Cardinal Manning*, *The Anglo-Catholic*, *The Oxford Movement*.

12. FARLANE-BARROW, MAC, formerly rector of the Church of All Saints in Glasgow and minister of the Scotch Episcopal Church. His own bishop made the announcement of his conversion from the pulpit. He was received into the Catholic Church in Glasgow with the attendance of many Catholics and non-Catholics.

13. ROLOFF, PROFESSOR ERNST M., editor of the *Lexikon der Pädagogik*. His best known books are *Aegypten einst und jetzt* (*Egypt As It Was and As It Is*), *In zwei Welten* (*In Two Worlds*), *Im Lande der Bibel* (*In the Land of the Bible*), *Agypten von der Römerherrschaft bis zur Gegenwart* (*Egypt From the Time of the Romans Till Our Day*). Professor Roloff was also associate editor of *Herder's Konversationslexikon*.

14. SCHMIDT, REV. DR. EXPEDIT, is prominent as a literary critic and theatrical expert. He has also lectured extensively on literary topics throughout Germany. The best known of his books are *Vom Lutheraner zum Franziskaner* (*From a Lutheran to a Franciscan*), *Die Bühnenverhältnisse des deutschen Schuldramas im 16. Jahrhundert* (*State Management of the German School Dramas in the 16th Century*), *Literarische Fremdherrschaft in Deutschland* (*Foreign Literary Dominion in German Literature*), *Faust*, *Goethe's Menschheitsdichtung* (*Faust, Goethe's Universal Literary Creation*). Father Schmidt moreover published a collection of the works of Otto Ludwig. He managed the great Cologne Passion Play in 1912, and in 1933 he was appointed stage manager of the Bavarian State Theater in Munich.

15. SCHAEFFER, EDUARD, M.D.\*

16. WENDLANDT, HANS CARL, published, as student of Protestant theology, a standard work on the religious

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congregations of women in Prussia. *Die weiblichen Orden und Kongregationen der katholischen Kirche und ihre Wirksamkeit in Preussen von 1818 bis 1918* (*The Religious Orders and Congregation of Women of the Catholic Church and Their Activities in Prussia from 1818 till 1918*). Besides, Mr. Wendlandt contributes to various German Catholic magazines.

17. BRAUN, DR. ROBERT, a native of Vienna, became a convert to the Catholic Church in 1934. Besides publishing a book on poetry *Gang in der Nacht* (*Walking in the Night*), for which he was awarded the Julius Reich Prize in 1932, Dr. Braun wrote many essays on personality, culture, and Christianity. Talks on the same topics were given over many radio stations of Europe. Due to the growing anti-Semitism, Dr. Braun henceforth wrote anonymously. His last book *Kampf um den Berg* (*Struggling for Mountain Peaks*), was published under the pseudonym Robert Montis. In 1938 he was forced to leave Austria with his wife and child in order to escape the tyranny of the Nazi authorities.

18. DESSEWFFY, EMMA, of Budapest was well known for her social work throughout Hungary. She is one of the few women who received the so-called Elizabeth decoration from her government.

19. MARCHANT, HENDRIK PIETER, was Minister of Arts, Science, and Education of the Netherlands at the time of his conversion in 1934. After studying law at Leiden and practising law for many years, Marchant soon entered the field of politics. In 1917 he became the leader of the Liberal Democratic Party. It was mainly due to his efforts that woman suffrage became a grant for the Netherlands in 1919. He also contributed regularly essays on political and national problems to newspapers and periodicals. After serving repeatedly as a member of the Council of the Hague, Marchant became Minister of Arts, Science,

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\* Biographical details withheld at desire of the contributor.



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and Education, in 1933. The story of his conversion is contained in his book *Hoe kwam ik er toe?* (*How Came I To Do It?*). It has been translated into several languages.

20. LEER, FRANZISKA VAN, is one of the most interesting Jewish converts of Europe. After her conversion she lectured publicly and privately on the subject of her conversion and the possibility of the conversion of the Jews. On her lecture tour she visited Germany, Belgium, France, England, Spain, Italy, Poland, Austria, and Palestine. She published two books, one of which is written in French, *Harte, Histoire d'une âme* (*Harte, the History of a Soul*), the other in Dutch, *De Vriend* (*The Friend*).

21. LENA, IRMA DI.\*

22. UNDSET, SIGRID, Norwegian novelist and the third woman to receive the Nobel Prize for literature, became a Catholic in 1925 in the chapel of the old Catholic cathedral in Hammer which she helped to reconstruct. Fröken Undset is wont to wear the national costume of the Viking matron of the Middle Ages and uses modern clothes only on trips away from her home. Her works include: *Kristin Lavransdatter*, *In the Wilderness*, *The Burning Bush*, *Saga of Saints*, and *Gunnar's Daughter*. She is one of the best known novelists of our times.

23. BERGWITZ, PASTOR HAAKON.\*

24. SANTESSON, NILS E.\*

25. SWANBOM, SIGRID, formerly directress of an institution for feeble-minded children in Upsala, took up residence in Italy after her conversion.

26. OLRİK, JAKOB, studied law after completing his classical studies in Odense. Later he took up the study of Philosophy in Paderborn, Innsbruck, and Rome. After his ordination to the holy priesthood, he became assistant priest at the Church of the Holy Rosary in Copenhagen and later secretary of Bishop von Euch. From 1912-18 he intervened in behalf of the prisoners of war in Siberia.

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\* Biographical details withheld at desire of the contributor.

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After the death of Bishop von Euch, he was appointed Vicar-Apostolic and pastor of the Church in Fredericia.

27. ROSENÖRN-LEHN, BARONESSE ERIKKE, was commissioned by her Bishop to translate the Old and New Testament into the Danish language, which she successfully did. A more extensive account of her conversion is contained in her book *Min Wandrebog (My Itinerary)*.

28. CLAUDEL, PAUL, ambassador and poet, is recognized as one of the greatest of living poets. He is a mystic and his works are full of veiled logic and hidden meaning. Best known of his dramas are *Tête d'or (The Golden Head)*, *L'échange (The Exchange)*, *Le repos du septième jour (Repose on the Seventh Day)*. Probably his most widely known work is *L'annonce faite à Marie (The Annunciation)*. He is likewise outstanding as a lyric poet. Since 1893 he has been in the diplomatic service of his country. After serving as ambassador in Tokyo, he became ambassador to the United States, and represents the French government in Brussels at the present time.

29. JAMMES, FRANCIS, is a poet of great ability. His works breathe rare beauty and are of exquisite tenderness. His novels are a delight to the most fastidious. The most popular of these are *Le Roman du lièvre (Novel of the Hare)*, as well as *Almaïde* and *Marie*. Francis Jammes died in 1938.

30. MATORRAS, DON ENRIQUE was secretary general of the central Communist Youth Committee of Spain and returned to the Catholic Church in 1934. At that time he published his disavowal of Communism and appealed to his former comrades to follow his example.

31. MAEZTU, DON RAMIRO DE, one of the great leaders of cultural Spain, gained international fame as an essayist. He was a regular contributor to Spanish and English newspapers, e.g., to the Spanish paper *A.B.C.* (Madrid) and the *Las Provincias* (Valencia). His attacks were aimed at the liberal parties in Spain. In 1932 de



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Maeztu became the co-founder and editor of the historic-political periodical *Accion Española* (*Spanish Action*). Of his books are to be mentioned *Las Crisis del Humanismo* (*The Crisis of Humanism*), and *Hacia otra España* (*Towards Another Spain*). During the dictatorship de Maeztu was sent as special delegate to South America. Later on he became a deputy to the Cortes and the inspirator of the *Renovacion Española*, a party founded for the renovation of Spain. He was also a member of the Spanish Academy of Sciences. De Maeztu was brutally shot by the Reds on November 7, 1936. Before his death he called out to his executioners: "You do not know why you are killing me, but I know very well why I die, namely, that your sons may one day be better than you."

32. BACKHEUSER, PROFESSOR DR. EVERARDO, Rio de Janeiro, is professor of mineralogy and geology at the Polytechnic School in Rio de Janeiro. He is, moreover, chief engineering supervisor of all municipal plants of Rio and a member of the Academy of Science of Brazil.

33. PUZYNA, PROFESSOR DR. IVAN, studied in Petersburg and Rome. He published numerous articles in Russian, German, English, French, and Serbian. Of his German publications are to be mentioned, *Die russisch-orthodoxe Kirche und the Unionsfrage* (*The Russian-orthodox Church and the Problem of Reunion*), *Die Kultur der Renaissance in Italien und Russland* (*The Culture of the Renaissance in Italy and Russia*), *Dostojewski und das Evangelium Aeternum* (*Dostojewski and the Eternal Gospel*). In French, *Le bolshévisme et le monde catholique* (*Bolshevism and the Catholic World*). In English, *Is Russia the Key to the Reunion of Eastern Orthodoxy?* Dr. Puzyna is now Professor at the Institut Catholique of Paris.

34. GALITZIN, PRINCE DIMITRI, is a relative of the Prince, priest, and pioneer, Dimitri Augustine Galitzin

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(Père Smith), over whose tomb a monument was erected at Loretto, Pennsylvania.

35. YAMAMOTO, ADMIRAL SHINJIRO S., took part in three wars. He was the first in the history of Japan to be sent to the Holy Father with a message from the Japanese government. Yamamoto also is head of the *Seinenkwai*, an organization of Catholic laymen, which is doing much good for the Catholics in the Orient. He visited the United States last in 1938.\*

36. TANAKA, PROFESSOR DR. PAUL KOTARO, is Professor of Law at the Imperial University of Tokyo. Likewise he is editor-in-chief of the *Catholic Encyclopedia* which is being published in the Japanese language by the Catholic University of Tokyo in cooperation with the Herder Publishing Company, Germany.

37. LOU TSENG-TSIANG, DOM PIERRE CÉLESTIN, O.S.B., is a member of the Benedictine community at Lophem near Brussels, Belgium. Formerly ambassador, Prime Minister of China, and Minister of Foreign Affairs. He began his diplomatic career at the Chinese legation at Petersburg, where he served successively as attaché, secretary, and counselor. Here he also met his later wife, the niece of the Belgian minister to the court of Petersburg, Miss Berthe Bovy. After his appointment as Minister to the Hague he remained in that city till his return to Petersburg in 1911. At that time he abjured Protestantism and embraced the Faith of his wife. When, however, the Chinese government collapsed, he was recalled and appointed Minister of Foreign Affairs. Later he headed the Chinese delegation to the so-called Peace Conference at Versailles and refused to give his signature to the ignominious Peace Treaty. His wife died in 1926. Shortly after the passing of his wife, Lou Tseng-Tsiang retired from his post and entered the Benedictine Abbey of St. Andrew at Lophem, near Brussels. He received the Benedictine habit October 4, 1927, was received into

\* This convert is not to be identified with, nor is he related, to Admiral Yamamoto who commanded the Japanese fleet at the time of the attack on Pearl Harbor. Admiral Shinjiro Yamamoto was already retired at that time.



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the Novitiate under the name Pierre Célestin, on January 14, 1928, and made his solemn vows January 15, 1932. His ordination to the priesthood took place at the hands of the Most Rev. Archbishop Celsus Costantini, on June 29, 1935, in the Abbey church. The Chinese ministers to the various European capitals attended and congratulations came from all over the world. Among his publications are to be mentioned: *L'invasion et l'occupation de la Mandchourie jugées à la lumière de la Doctrine Catholique par les écrits du Cardinal Mercier* (*The Invasion and Occupation of Manchuria Viewed in the Light of Catholic Doctrine According to the Writings of Cardinal Mercier*), *La vie et les oeuvres du grand Chretien chinois Paul Siu Koang-k'i* (*The Life and Works of the Great Chinese Christian Paul Siu Koang-k'i*).

38. BALASUBRAHMANYAM, L. M., is Professor at the Papal University (Pontificia Università Gregoriana) in Rome, Italy. He wrote the story of his conversion when still in India.

39. ANIMANANDA, BRAHMCHARI REWACHAND, hails from a militant Hindu caste of India and was formerly a member of the Sikh religion whose founder, Guru Nanak, was considered a holy man and representative of the purest form of theism. Animananda is the baptismal name for Paul in the Hindu language.

40. NARAYAN, J. STEPHEN, first became an Anglican clergyman after accepting Christianity. After his conversion to the Catholic Church he became Professor at St. Joseph's College in Trincomalee, Ceylon, and Secretary of the Catholic Press Committee.

41. MNDAWENI, RUDOLPH ARCHIBALD, published some excellent treatises in the Zulu language about the marks of the true Church and the obligation to join her. He is now active as teacher and catechist and won many Protestants over to the true Faith.